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ABSTRACT

Focusing on young adult reading and instruction, this issue addresses teachers' concerns about recommended recent authors and books, integrating independent reading into the reading program, and student motivation. The titles of the articles and their authors are as follows: (1) "Some YA Authors Worth Knowing, and a Few Books, Too" (Ken Donelson); (2) "The Novels of Jill Paton Walsh: Gifts for the Lords of Time" (Sue Lewis); (3) "Fantasy Made Real: Books by Robin McKinley" (Carolyn L. Powell); (4) "The Best in Fantasy and Science Fiction: A High-Interest Booklist for Young Adults" (Patricia Harper and Cynthia Helms); (5) "Appealing Nonfiction" (Norma Gardner); (6) "The Way We Will Be: The Search for Gender Identity in Young Adult Books" (Judith Rosenfeld); (7) "Increasing Sensitivity to Sex Role Stereotyping: Classroom Exercises and Discussion Questions" (Barbara Hoyt); (8) "No More Plot Summaries: Teaching Critical Focus in Independent Reading Responses" (Elizabeth McMahan); (9) "From Independent Study to Term Paper" (Patricia Geiser); (10) "'Lord of the Flies': A Cooperative Approach" (Teresa Lucie-Nietzke); (11) "Strategies to Encourage Independent Reading" (Kathy Schlatter); (12) "Oral Reading: Magic and Motivation" (Margaret E. Rinkel); (13) "Reading across the Curriculum: A Holistic Approach" (Sue Izett, Barbara Randolph, and Marion Carroll); (14) "No Man Is an Island: A Book Discussion Seminar for the Gifted" (Christine Wahl Billone); and (15) "Garden Hills Turnaround in Reading" (Phyllis Wilken). (JD)

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WINTER 1987

Getting Students to Read:
New Materials and Methods

ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

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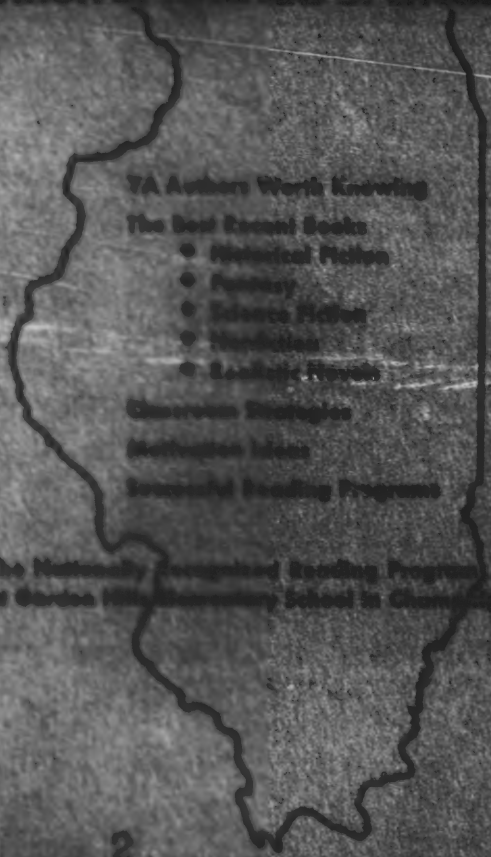

7A Authors Worth Knowing

The Best Recent Books

- Historical Fiction
- Fantasy
- Science Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Realistic Novels

Classroom Strategies

Motivation Ideas

Successful Reading Programs

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Getting Students to Read: New Materials and Methods

Illinois English Bulletin
Winter 1987

Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE)

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ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

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About This Issue

The response to the call for manuscripts for this issue has been heartening. They have come in from a variety of sources and have answered the very questions which Illinois teachers have shown a special interest in: which recent authors are most worthy of attention? what books should teachers be recommending? how can independent reading be worked into the program? and how can teachers motivate students, especially marginal ones, to develop a love of books?

Ken Donelson, co-editor of *English Journal* and co-author of the popular textbook, *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, opens the issue by identifying his favorite authors, selected from those currently writing in the young adult field. Next are five articles, each addressing a different category of outside reading: historical fiction, fantasy, science fiction, nonfiction, and realistic novels which deal with sex role identification. These recommendations come from a cross-section of specialists: librarians, researchers in education, and classroom teachers from both secondary and college levels.

The next four articles present specific strategies, which range from using special exercises and discussion questions to raise gender consciousness to handling students' reading responses through writing and cooperative activities. These are followed by two articles dealing with the problem of motivation.

The issue closes with descriptions of three successful reading programs from a community college, a high school seminar for the gifted, and finally, an elementary school. This last article, written by Phyllis Wilken, principal of Garden Hills Elementary School in Champaign, tells how she was able to turn their reading program around to such an extent that her school was featured in a nationally televised one-hour documentary called "Drop Everything and Read."

Dorothy Matthews
Editor

Some YA Authors Worth Knowing, and a Few Books, Too

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A long time back, when I first started mining the gold fields of adolescent literature, I discovered that creating booklists of adolescent novels I admired was easier than it probably seemed to some people. All I had to do was keep up with my reading — no easy thing there since some writers cranked them out like Nancy Drews, and unknowns kept popping up with occasional unpredictable books, and the standards usually held to their standards — and keep up with my notetaking and listmaking. All in all, a safe and simple way to get published.

This time I'd like to try something different, or at least something just a bit different. What I've done is to compile a list of authors that I think are worth watching, either for what they have written or for what their books suggest about an important author in the making. I don't expect many, or any, readers in the field to be in total agreement with my assessments, but my list may suggest a few authors that some readers may have missed or underestimated (my assumption, not necessarily the readers'). At the very least, these are the authors that I've most enjoyed or been most impressed by in the last three years (I used 1983 as a beginning point for no terribly logical reason other than to justify the list as reasonably contemporary). And I've copped out a bit at the end by adding a brief comment on a few authors I probably should have added to the list. Herewith, then, is a short list of some authors that I've admired for their recent books.

(1) Fran Arrick and Judie Angell, one and the same author — Arrick writing the more serious books, Angell the more lighthearted. Arrick's ***Nice Girl from Good Home*** (Bradbury, 1984) is a fine study of social class differences; and the picture of religion and what people do in its name in ***God's Radar*** (Bradbury, 1983) is equally fine. Angell's ***Suds, A New Daytime Drama*** (Bradbury, 1983) is a delightful spoof of soaps and romances that students either love or hate.

(2) Avi's ***Devil's Race*** (Lippincott, 1984) is a spooky mystery story, the first of his books I've thoroughly enjoyed. John Proud

researches his family history and learns more than he wishes about an ancestor who was hanged as a devil.

(3) Clare Bell's ***Ratha's Creature*** (Atheneum, 1983) and ***Clan Ground*** (Atheneum, 1984) are set way back in prehistory when Ratha is part of a clan of intelligent cats who herd other animals and protect their possessions against marauding wildcats. It's not in the least cute or sweet but believable and sometimes violent.

(4) Joan W. Blos' ***Brothers of the Heart*** (Scribner, 1985). Shem and Margaret remember their lives as they celebrate their fiftieth anniversary. Shem was the crippled son of a fiddler on the nineteenth-century Michigan frontier.

(5) Nancy Bond's ***A Place to Come Back to*** (Atheneum, 1984) is something of a sequel to ***The Best of Enemies*** and a book by the most underrated, important author writing for young adults today.

(6) James Lincoln Collier and his brother Christopher have been providing sound, well-written historical novels for some time, and they've rarely received the praise they deserve. ***War Comes to Willy Freeman*** (Delacorte, 1983) and ***Who Is Carrie?*** (Delacorte, 1984) convey a sense of time and the sweat of history better than most adult novels.

(7) No one writing about YA books could ignore Robert Cormier, but it's sometimes easy to forget how enjoyable his books are, amidst all the praise he's given. ***The Bumblebee Flies Anyway*** (Pantheon, 1983) is one of his best and possibly his most optimistic book. I hadn't looked forward to ***Beyond the Chocolate War*** (Knopf, 1985) —surely one of the worst titles of the last three years — because most sequels are disappointing, but this was almost as good as the original, and some students have told me they thought it superior to the first book.

(8) When I read Chris Crutcher's ***Running Loose*** (Greenwillow, 1983), I thought it the best YA first novel I'd read in a long time. I still do. Louie's love life and his problems with a coach and a principal are touching and often very funny. ***Stotan!*** (Greenwillow, 1986) may be less important, but its picture of the senior year of a tight group of friends is powerful.

(9) Judy Delton's ***Near Occasion of Sin*** (Harcourt, 1985) bothered several reviewers with its calculated and often cold treatment of the growing up of a Catholic girl, but it had power, and readers were almost never bored.

(10) It was, unfortunately, easy to miss Charles Ferry's ***Raspberry One*** (Houghton Mifflin, 1983) and ***One More Time!***

(Houghton Mifflin, 1985), but readers who did missed a realistic picture of war and courage in the first and a marvelous account of the last tour of one of the pre-World War II big bands while the band begins to break up in the second book.

(11) I suppose Paula Fox's name is well known to anyone in the YA field, but like Cormier, in the midst of all the praise, we forget what a magnificent storyteller she is. ***One Eyed Cat*** (Bradbury, 1984) is about guilt and expiation and a young boy with an air rifle. ***The Moonlight Man*** (Bradbury, 1986) begins as Catherine Ames waits — for three weeks — at her boarding school for her charming and apologetic and alcoholic father to pick her up. It's Fox's most powerful novel, not merely the best thing she's done since ***The Slave Dancer*** but a book that I believe will become one of the hallmarks in its field.

(12) Lynn Hall usually goes ignored among the listmakers, though ***Too Near the Sun*** and ***Sticks and Stones*** are sometimes kindly remembered.But while more pretentious writers take up *this* serious topic and *that* social ailment, Hall keeps writing about horses and girls growing up in readable stories that deserve and usually find enthusiastic readers. I'd recommend ***Denison's Daughter*** (Scribner, 1983), ***Megan's Mare*** (Scribner, 1983), ***Uphill All the Way*** (Scribner, 1984), ***Just One Friend*** (Scribner, 1985), ***If Winter Comes*** (Scribner, 1986), and ***The Solitary*** (Scribner, 1986).

(13) Erik Christian Haugaard's ***The Samurai's Tale*** (Houghton Mifflin, 1984) is a colorful introduction to sixteenth-century Japan as a samurai's son is taken in a raid and grows up a slave.

(14) Janni Howker's ***Badger on the Barge*** (Greenwillow, 1985) is a collection of five short stories, mostly about older people, which are skillful and memorable. ***The Nature of the Beast*** (Greenwillow, 1985) seems, at first reading, more conventional, but the story of a wild animal and an almost equally wild young boy stays with the reader.

(15) Monica Hughes' ***Hunter in the Dark*** (Atheneum, 1983) is, for me, one of the great stories of a young man learning to face his illness and his approaching death.

(16) Dianna Wynne Jones' novels often go praised and unread, and probably her books do need to be brought to kids, for they may easily ignore them on their own. But her humor and fantasy come alive in books like ***Archer's Goon*** (Greenwillow, 1984), ***Fire and Hemlock*** (Greenwillow, 1985), and especially ***Howl's Moving Castle*** (Greenwillow, 1986) when the eldest of three daughters sets out to seek her fortune.

(17) Robert Kaplow's ***Alex Icicle: A Romance in Ten Torrid Chapters*** (Houghton Mifflin, 1984) is aimed at younger readers (the lower junior high set), but it is also the funniest novel I've read in years. I recommend it to anyone who recalls the horrors of love and failure in junior high. I recommend it to anyone who doesn't remember.

(18) Kathryn Lasky's ***Beyond the Divide*** (Macmillan, 1983) is one of my favorite historical novels of the last ten years, but then ***Home Free*** (Four Winds, 1985) is almost equally good.

(19) Maybe she's too English or too fantastic, but Louise Lawrence seems rarely to have received the press or the readers she deserves. Almost anything she writes is fine, but I'd especially recommend her latest book, ***Moonwind*** (Harper, 1986) for a love involving one of the strangest triangles on record and ***Children of the Dust*** (Harper, 1985) for its honest and dramatic portrait of three generations of a family after a global nuclear war.

(20) One of my students felt that John LeVert's ***The Flight of the Cassowary*** (Atlantic Monthly, 1986) was the best first novel she'd ever read. It's a funny and often touching story of a young man faced with all the usual problems of growing up who takes refuge in talking to a dog, then becoming, temporarily, other animals, and finally learning to fly. It sticks with readers when most other books are forgotten.

(21) Michelle Magorian's ***Back Home*** (Harper, 1984) is another of those superior English YA novels, this about a youngster sent to America when World War II rages and who later returns to a country she neither knows nor likes.

(22) Dallin Malmgren's ***The Whole Nine Yards*** (Delacorte, 1986) is another excellent first novel. The plot is hardly new — a boy seeks obsessively for the perfect girl and then has trouble accepting the responsibility for the relationship when he may have found her — but the characters ring true and it's totally believable. One of my most sophisticated students said it was "the best book I've read in a long time, a very long time."

(23) Ray Maloney's ***The Impact Zone*** (Delacorte, 1986) won the Third Annual Delacorte Prize for a first novel, the first of the three I thought had much chance of surviving more than a year or so. The son of the greatest surfing photographer needs to prove his worth and manhood to himself and his usually absent father.

(24) Harry Mazer's ***Hey, Kid! Does She Love Me?*** (Crowell, 1984) and ***Cave under the City*** (Crowell, 1986) may not be the best of his work, but ***Cave*** is a way of letting kids learn something about the Depression and ***Hey, Kid!*** is a fine offbeat romance.

(25) Norma Fox Mazer's ***Taking Terri Mueller*** (Morrow,

1983) is beautifully characterized, as are all her books, and its story of a young girl kidnapped by her father is timely without being melodramatic. ***Someone to Love*** (Delacorte, 1983), is a believable love story of our time, and ***Downtown*** (Morrow, 1984) is Pete's story of his peace-movement parents.

(26) Robin McKinley's ***The Hero and the Crown*** (Greenwillow, 1984) and her collection of fantasy stories, ***Imaginary Lands*** (Greenwillow, 1986) are, as usual, fine, though neither seems to me as great as ***Beauty***. Still, less than great McKinley is better than most other writers.

(27) Joan Lowrey Nixon's books are too often tossed aside as mysteries and little more, but they're superior YA suspense/mysteries. Her most recent, ***The Other Side of Dark*** (Delacorte, 1986) with its portrait of a young girl assaulted by the same man who killed her mother and who wakes up after a four-year coma is brilliantly handled. But then her other books are readable and worth reading — ***The Ghosts of Now*** (Delacorte, 1984) and ***The Stalker*** (Delacorte, 1985).

(28) Jean Davies Okimoto's ***Jason's Women*** is funny and poignant and more. Jason answers a letter in the classified ads and gets a job and learns about himself and even something about his distant father.

(29) Zibby Oneal's ***In Summer Light*** (Viking, 1985) is far and away her best book. Young artist Kate spends a summer with her parents and learns that her attempt to compete with her father has led her to personal misery and professional disappointment.

(30) I assume it's possible that Katherine Paterson might write a poor or mediocre book, but I doubt it. ***Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom*** (Lodestar, 1983) is fine historical writing about a religious war in China during the mid-nineteenth century.

(31) Gary Paulsen's first novel or two hardly seemed impressive, but everything since then has been. ***Tracker*** (Bradbury, 1984) is John's attempt to accept — or learn to live with — his grandfather's coming death. ***Dogsong*** (Bradbury, 1985) is about modern Eskimo life and the inevitable adjustments to modern society. ***Sentries*** (Bradbury, 1986) interconnects stories of four teenagers throughout the United States with three veterans from different wars.

(32) I'm no great fan of fantasy so when I'm as excited about a writer as I am about Meredith Ann Pierce, she must have something working for her. I'd highly recommend ***A Gathering of Gargoyles*** (Atlantic, 1984), second in her ***Darkangel*** trilogy and ***Birth of the Firebringer*** (Four Winds, 1985), first of a trilogy in which Jan, Prince of the Unicorns, goes off on a pilgrimage to find his destiny.

(33) There's nothing all that different about Marc Talbert's ***Dead Birds Singing*** (Little, Brown, 1985), but the story of a young boy who awkwardly adjusts to a new family after his own is killed is well told, honest, and unsentimentalized.

(34) Julian F. Thompson has written nothing nearly as good since ***The Grounding of Group 6*** (Avon, 1983) — and much that is really dreadful — but this one book is brilliant and exciting and, surprisingly, often funny. When a group of new students arrives at their school, they are sent off on an orientation trip out in the wilderness and learn to their horror that their parents have paid to have them killed. If you can accept that premise — not all that difficult for some young people — you'll delight in the book. Far-fetched fun.

(35) There are few YA novelists so consistently fine as Cynthia Voigt, and her large output of work is proof that a few writers like Voigt and Joyce Carol Oates can produce volumes of stuff fast without lowering standards. ***Dicey's Song*** (Atheneum, 1983) is probably the best known of her books but almost equally good are ***Jackaroo*** (Atheneum, 1985) and ***Izzy, Willy Nilly*** (Atheneum, 1986).

(36) I was impressed with Claudia Von Canon's ***The Inheritance*** (Houghton Mifflin, 1983) when I first read it, and after three other readings (each for a different reason), I'm more impressed than ever with this story of a young medical student summoned home to take over his father's property in Spain during the last years of the sixteenth century. The Inquisition has rarely been portrayed so exactly as in this painstakingly accurate book that makes history live.

(37) I've not read a political thriller I enjoyed — or learned from — so much as James Watson's ***Talking in Whispers*** (Knopf, 1983) in some time. In Junta-era Chile, a teenage boy becomes a political prisoner, is tortured, and survives. It's a cruel but realistic story of political enslavement and chicanery, one that kids ought to read, given our world, especially for conditions in many South American countries.

Adolescent literature today is a rich world with some excellent writers and many fine novels worth your time and, more important, your students' time. The writers I've listed are obviously personal favorites, and I'm sure you could add others that teenagers would enjoy.

Let me end by suggesting a baker's dozen of other writers, some of them my favorites over the years, that I might just as easily have included in the above list. Rachel Anderson's ***The Poacher's Son*** (Oxford University Press, 1983); Bruce Brooks' ***The Moves Make the Man*** (Harper, 1984) and ***Midnight Hour Encores***

(Harper, 1986) — I read this as I was typing the last draft of this, and I have an uncomfortable feeling that Brooks should be on the longer list; Peter Burchard's ***Sea Change*** (Farrar, 1984); Aidan Chambers' ***Dance on My Grave*** (Harper, 1983); Mollie Hunter's ***Cat, Herself*** (Harper, 1986); M. E. Kerr's ***I Stay Near You*** (Harper, 1985) and ***Night Kites*** (Harper, 1986); Kenneth Lillington's ***Selkie*** (Faber, 1985); Richard Peck's ***Remembering the Good Times*** (Delacorte, 1986); Marilyn Sach's ***The Fat Girl*** (Dutton, 1983); Sandra Scoppettone's ***Playing Murder*** (Harper, 1985); William Sleator's ***Singularity*** (Dutton, 1985); John Rowe Townsend's ***Kate and the Revolution*** (Lippincott, 1983); and Laurence Yep's ***Mountain Light*** (Harper, 1985).

The Novels of Jill Paton Walsh: Gifts for the Lords of Time

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In a time when young people are faced with dealing with the possibility of nuclear warfare and other horrors, a look back at history's lessons can be very rewarding. Teachers of English often find it difficult to locate novels for students that honestly present the lessons of history in a style palatable for the taste of today's young reader. Jill Paton Walsh has chosen the historical novel as her literary medium. Her keen interpretation of history in terms of human values makes her an author very worthy of attention in today's literature classroom.

Walsh has said, "There is nothing more important than writing well for the young, if literature is to have continuance. And they are the Lords of Time, in whose courts we beg for favors, hoping that the gifts we can bring them may secure their favor for our cause" (***Lords*** 113). Walsh is a highly honored British writer for young people who has taken this challenge seriously and has had published over twenty-one beautifully written books over the past two decades. She is acclaimed by her critics as being one of the most exciting writers for young people today.

In her novels, Walsh has artfully combined two key elements: the skillful art of storytelling and the careful and thorough re-

searching of subject matter. Walsh has recognized the inseparable nature of these two elements in historical fiction. She has stated that "to be a historical novelist you have to be as good at history as any historian," and that like the historian "the novelist, too, confronts the inchoate material of the past and brings out of it an imposed narrative coherence — a story, or a history" ("History" 22-23).

Walsh's books span human history from the prehistoric age to the space age, focusing on ten specific time periods. Her novels not only offer her readers insight into the past but also offer youthful heroes for her readers to identify with that are human, believable, and very courageous in adverse circumstances.

In ***Toolmaker,*** written in 1974, Walsh recreates the society of the Stone Age. By creating characters who speak in short, simple statements and by giving characters one-syllable names, she makes this time period come alive for fifth and sixth graders. Ra, a young boy reaching manhood, is commissioned to make tools for his tribe on the provision that the tribe share their food with him. When times become lean and little food is to be found, the tribesmen forget their agreement and abandon Ra, leaving him to starve. Ra is a survivor, and the story shows early man coping with change and finding solutions for social problems.

The next time period Walsh concentrates on is that of Ancient Greece in the fifth century B.C. In 1972 she published ***Farewell, Great King,*** which is a novel for older adolescents and adults about the Persian Wars. Walsh writes this novel in autobiographical form as an apologia of an Athenian general to the Persian King Artaxexes.

Walsh's second work set in the days of Ancient Greece is ***The Children of the Fox.*** Written in 1978 for grades six through eight, this book is a collection of three stories about the Persian Wars in which the young hero and heroines render service to the Athenian hero, Themistokles. Each story contains an afterword giving the book's factual base.

Pre-Roman Britain is the third time period to intrigue Walsh. In ***The Island Sunrise,*** written in 1976 for adults, she presents a cultural history which covers the history of the British Isles from prehistoric times until the arrival of the Romans in 55 B.C.

The Dark Ages in Anglo-Saxon England is the setting for two Walsh books. Her first book to be published in 1966, ***Hengest Tale,*** and the collection of short stories, ***The Wordhoard*** (1969), are concerned with the early days of England from the fifth century A.D. to 1066 and the Norman Conquest. ***Hengest Tale*** is based on the legend found in ***Beowulf*** and other English poetry.

This exciting and often bloody adventure describes the battles between Hengest, a ruler of Kent, and warring tribes. Hengest tells his own sad tale of his decline from an idealistic young man to a bloodthirsty ruler, who kills a friend out of misled loyalty.

In 1969 Walsh collaborated with Kevin Crossley-Holland to write ***Wordhoard: Anglo-Saxon Stories,*** a collection of eight stories based either on true events, actual people, or tales suggested by the poetry and prose of the Dark Ages in England. Each author wrote four stories. Critics have called this work, "The first successful attempt to present a sensitive vision of Anglo-Saxon life to teens" (MacDuffie 91).

From the Anglo-Saxon days of England, Walsh moves in time to 1453, A.D. and the historic fall of the Byzantium Empire. ***The Emperor's Winding Sheet*** (1974), is the story of a young English boy who finds himself witness to the fall of Constantinople. Walsh uses in-depth characterizations and poignant narrative to recreate the collapse of this empire. The boy, who is made the servant to King Constantine Palaeologos to fulfill a prophecy, provides the young person's observation of all that is taking place during the last days of Constantinople. Although several reviewers list this work for junior-high-age readers, most critics agree that it has great appeal and can be enjoyed as a challenge by adult readers who love history.

In 1983 Walsh wrote ***A Parcel of Patterns,*** one of her most moving and tender works, in my opinion. Based on the historic accounts of the village of Eyam in Derbyshire, England, during the year of 1665-66, Walsh tells the story of personal courage and suffering which was characteristic of this tragic time in history. The progress of the plague's devastation on Eyam forms the major plot of this novel. Mall Percival, the young heroine, records her memories of this terrible year to help herself cope with her grief.

The character of Mall is beautifully developed. She is a sixteen-year-old Puritan girl who possesses the qualities of strength, loyalty, sincerity, and dependability. Since she does not contract the disease, she helps her neighbors in unrelenting and unselfish fashion, but sadly discovers that she is resented and even hated by some for being healthy. Throughout the tragedy, Mall maintains a youthful optimism and strength of character that is remarkable. Young readers today can easily identify with her fears, her passionate first love, and her struggles with her religious convictions.

The language and sentence structure of this novel is that of the seventeenth century in England. Although the antiquated language is sometimes slow to read, it is appropriate and helps create the

atmosphere of the novel. Walsh sticks closely to the history and traditions of Eyam for her details.

This very sensitive account serves as an example of courage and a lesson in human sacrifice. The village itself exemplifies the idea that morality extends to thinking about the consequences of our actions on others and that society must not be self-serving to survive.

Walsh has written two novels about the hardships suffered by the young during the Industrial Revolution in England, which occurred from 1750 to 1900. In 1975 she wrote ***The Huffler*** for grades five through seven, which tells of the adventures of Harry, an eleven-year-old girl who runs away and works with two children on canal boats carrying cargo to a paper mill. The novel is filled with suspense and adventure.

A later Walsh work which expands on this time period has won great acclaim. ***The Chance Child*** (1978), concentrates on the horrors of child labor practices in England during the Industrial Revolution. For the first time in her writings, Walsh turns to the element of fantasy to form her story.

Creep, a terribly abused and neglected twentieth-century child, crosses the time barrier into the nineteenth century and becomes the companion of Tom and Blackie. Creep saves Tom in a coal mine and later meets Blackie, who has been disfigured in an accident in a foundry. The trio work in a coal mine, and then Blackie and Creep move on to a cotton mill to work. Throughout their adventure, they come into contact with and help children who are mistreated and who work long hours at very dangerous jobs.

Christopher, who is Creep's half-brother, is the only person who ever cared for Creep. Walsh alternates chapters which tell of Creep's adventures in the nineteenth century with Christopher's search for Creep in the twentieth century. When Creep physically crosses into the past, Christopher senses what has happened. He researches the Parliamentary Papers of the past century to learn of the fate of his brother and discovers the record of Nathanal Creep. Christopher is then satisfied that his brother found a place in the past.

Walsh has created in this book a gripping and yet tender account of children who band together and help each other in adverse circumstances. The time travel theme is well executed and does not distract from the overall theme. Typical of all her works, Walsh has done a thorough job of researching her time period.

Two of Walsh's most popular works among young adult readers are those written about England during World War II. ***The Dolphin Crossing*** (1967), tells the story of two teenage boys who

get involved in the relief of Dunkirk. John Aston, who is high-minded and idealistic, befriends Pat, an evacuee from London, and moves Pat and his pregnant mother into his family's stables. The two boys, frustrated by being too young to go to war, take on a daring adventure. They cross the channel in a small boat, the "Dolphin," to help rescue soldiers off the coast of Dunkirk. They get caught in the full horror of the war. After the two return home, Pat slips off again and tragically does not return.

The plot of ***Fireweed***, Walsh's second World War II novel, centers around a few short weeks during the blitz in London in 1940. Julie and Bill, two young teenagers from very different social backgrounds, meet in the underground and share a couple of weeks before circumstances separate them. These two share the excitement and fear that accompanies being runaways in London when all lives were in danger. Caught up in the war, they are torn by a feeling of uselessness. They seek active ways to relieve their need to be useful. The early exhilaration of freedom fades, and they become engrossed in the serious business of survival when they take on the care of an abandoned toddler and try to make a home in a bombed-out house.

Walsh's detailed research is apparent. The reader can vividly see the destruction and almost smell the dust and smoke on the streets of London. The setting creates the perfect atmosphere for the theme of growing up, for the ever-present danger of the blitz forced the young people caught in London to do just that. The fear, devastation, and hopelessness that came daily during this period did not daunt the Londoner, nor the London teen. Walsh points out clearly that like the fireweed, people too can grow to maturity out of the "scars of ruin and flame" (***Fireweed*** 141).

Walsh has chosen a modern-day setting for five of her novels. Her set of young adult novels, ***Goldengrove*** (1972) and ***Unleaving*** (1976), has won many awards and is a favorite of Walsh's critics and her readers. ***Goldengrove*** is the story of Madge and Paul, a brother and sister who spend the summer at their grandmother's estate by the sea at Cornwall. Their parents divorced when the children were babies, and each took a child. Madge and Paul, who have always been told they are cousins, discover their true relationship during this special summer.

Walsh's descriptive passages are particularly beautiful in this book. She describes the sea as restless but dreamy, sometimes serene, and often cruel. This setting creates the perfect backdrop for the contradictory emotions adolescents experience as they mature. The artistic description of Cornwall, which was a special place in Walsh's own childhood, captivates the reader. As the sea-

side sets the mood, Walsh clearly points out her own belief that however disappointing life may be, accepting the unchangeable and holding on to the positive is the key to survival.

In ***Unleaving*** Walsh presents both physical and emotional struggles. The struggle of man to survive the sea is prevalent. The waves break victoriously against the rocky cliffs, and the lighthouse is frequently mentioned in a symbolic way. Walsh's language is vivid and the story moves rapidly although it frequently has a definite dreamlike sequence to the events. The remarkable description of setting is reminiscent of that of ***Wuthering Heights.***

Because of its depth, this novel borders the adolescent/adult line in literature. It is the most beautifully written book I have read in some time. The author's message is clear — no matter how difficult life may be, it is worthwhile and beautiful. The novel leaves the reader with his/her own disturbing questions about mercy killing, and yet has the artistic balance to leave the reader feeling satisfied. It is relevant, thought-provoking, disturbing, yet tender. The reader feels the full impact of Madge's words, "What shall we sing? O, the beauty of the world!" (***Unleaving*** 145).

The other three novels Walsh has set in modern times have a variety of themes and situations. ***Babylon,*** written for grades five through eight, is the story of three black children who live in a crowded, unpleasant urban area in London and who find a garden of wild flowers on a railway viaduct. The children compare the garden to their ideas of Zion. ***Gaffer Samson's Luck*** (1985), tells of the friendship formed between a lonely teen, James, who has had to move into a very small, Yorkshire flat, and Gaffer Samson, a crusty old man who lives down the row. ***Lost and Found,*** for grades six through nine, artistically links children from prehistoric times to modern England by a common adventure.

With ***The Green Book*** (1982), Walsh ventured into the space age. This is the story of space-age pioneers who can take very few books with them to their new home. Patti takes a blank notebook to write down their adventures. It is interesting that this space-age story is the only work of Walsh on which all the critics were somewhat negative.

Few authors for young people have produced so many pieces of fiction in a relatively short period of time that are the quality of those of Jill Paton Walsh. Whether writing historical fiction or books dealing with modern teens learning to grow up, her art rarely fails her, and her books always enlighten and entertain. Walsh expressed her personal view of the importance of literature for young people when she said,

> (Children) will inherit the earth; and nothing that we value will endure in the world unless they can be persuaded to value it too. (***Lords*** 113)

Jill Paton Walsh says that she writes about whatever she is fascinated by at the time. She says she has been "inflamed" with intellectual passion about Anglo-Saxon England, the Second World War, the Greeks, the fate of Byzantium, the nature of philosophy, life boats, canals, and the Industrial Revolution, and that now she is enthusiastically inflamed about the American War of Independence (***Lords*** 9). This somewhat awestruck fan and ever-faithful reader is anxiously awaiting the next product of this wonderful, intellectual passion.

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Fantasy Made Real: Books by Robin McKinley

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When I was a kid, I always loved reading fantasy. I also felt guilty for doing so because I knew that fantasy was just that: stories which probably had no bearing on reality. As I grew older, I worried about whether my view of the world could have been falsely constructed from reading too much fantasy when I was little. I even grew to feel guilty about my nostalgic love for the fairy tales of my childhood because I knew that they often promoted false lessons, lessons of women who needed saving and who could expect to be saved if only they waited long enough. As a teacher, I worry about the same thing for my students. Whenever a student asks for a recommendation of a good fantasy book, I am at a loss for something to suggest. But I have recently discovered Robin McKinley's books, and I don't have to feel guilty

or at a loss any longer. Robin McKinley writes fantasy which is firmly grounded in reality.

I first read McKinley's ***The Hero and the Crown*** because it won the Newbery Medal for 1985. I read it again because I liked it.

The Hero and the Crown is the story of Lady Aerin, the only child of King Arlbeth of Damar. A king, of course, ought to have sons, so Lady Aerin is something of a disappointment from the very beginning. On top of that minor disgrace, Aerin's mother, who died when Aerin was born, was rumored to have witch's blood in her, blood which she must certainly have passed on to Aerin. Aerin's troubles are compounded by the fact that she lacks both beauty and proper royal grace: she is clumsy and prone to breaking the royal tableware, for instance. These lacks confirm for the Damarian subjects their suspicions about Aerin's tainted blood. But Lady Aerin wants desperately to belong. She longs to win the respect of her father and of her father's people, and so she sets out to do just that. She begins by fighting dragons.

Aerin's beloved country is plagued by little (though fierce) dog-sized dragons, and periodically someone has to be sent out to do away with these pesky creatures. Aerin decides that she will become a dragon-killer and thereby be able to contribute something to the well-being of her country. She painstakingly teaches herself to ride, to wield a sword, and to make some fireproof potion. After many painful trials, her endeavor is ultimately successful, and Lady Aerin comes to be known as "Lady Aerin, Dragon-Killer." This success leads her to take on larger and larger tasks, and throughout the rest of the book Aerin takes on such foes as Mur, the Black Dragon and Agsdad, the Evil Mage.

The Hero and the Crown has all of the usual devices of fantasy — dragons, magic, the battle of good and evil — and Lady Aerin ultimately saves her country and marries the heir-apparent to her father's crown. But ***The Hero and the Crown*** is different from much other fantasy because Lady Aerin has to earn her honors for herself, rather than having them magically bestowed upon her for merely being a beautiful female.

I like ***The Hero and the Crown*** because it is quality writing which can be used as a model for students' writing, particularly with regard to certain stylistic devices such as effective repetition, effective mix of long and short sentences, and creative use of analogy, simile, and metaphor. I also like it because it is quality fantasy. According to several articles on the genre of fantasy, good fantasy parallels problems faced in growing up, deals with

morality, and deals with self-reliance (Cameron, Issayeva, Taylor, and Nilsen & Donelson). As Robert Taylor put it in his article in ***Horn Book*** (399), good fantasy provides occasion for " 'hopeful dreaming' as opposed to 'wishful thinking.' " ***The Hero and the Crown*** does all of these.

I like this book because of its unusual and creative content devices — the dog-sized dragons, a very down-to-earth wizard (a gentleman very much like the boy next door) — for its brilliant use of the monomyth — each successive separation, initiation, and return is bigger, more complex, and results in greater growth of the heroine — and for the fact that it has a female protagonist. This last is perhaps the most important, for very few fantasy novels use a female protagonist. The traditional notion of a hero rescuing a damsel in distress is the very thing which caused my worry and guilt before; in the real world, damsels in distress must save themselves if they are to grow. I dislike and distrust many fantasy novels because they promote an unrealistic expectation of the world; I prefer McKinley's approach which doesn't.

McKinley herself, in her Newbery Medal acceptance speech, offers an explanation for down-to-earth heroines. She says that there are two things about her early life which were important to her development as a writer. First, her family moved around a lot because her father was in the navy, so she read all the time to make up for the loss of lengthy friendships. She says that this caused the distinction between the outside and inside worlds to blur for her (397). I presume that this led to her choosing fantasy as the genre for depicting real-world problems. Second, McKinley says that she was always clumsy. So are her heroines (397). McKinley creates real people with real defects, not idealized super-people.

Because of its grounding in reality, ***The Hero and the Crown*** is thematically teachable. This is not simply escapist literature; the central theme is that of becoming self-reliant through hard work and determination. The book deals — albeit in a small way — with prejudice: Aerin experiences her compatriots' prejudice against her for being the witchwoman's daughter. Other important themes that could be dealt with in the classroom are the positive idea of good conquering evil and the lack of selfishness on the part of the heroine — Aerin acts from a desire to serve her people as much as from a desire to win respect and honor for herself. ***The Hero and the Crown*** might be a good book to include in a thematic unit on becoming self-reliant; it could both arouse the interest of fantasy fans in the unit and introduce the fantasy genre to those unfamiliar with it. It would fit in nicely with such

non-fantasy books as ***Where the Lilies Bloom*** by Vera and Bill Cleaver, ***The Oval Playground*** by William Campbell Gault, and ***The Cay*** by Theodore Taylor.

For any teacher doing a course or unit on fantasy, McKinley's books would be invaluable as an example of quality fantasy. It could be used along with ***The Hobbit***, for example, for a comparison of themes and motifs. Other fantasy works with female protagonists include: Anne McCaffrey's ***Dragonsong***, Lynn Abbey's ***Daughter of the Bright Moon***, Dahlov Ipcar's ***A Dark Horn Blowing***, and Diana Wynne Jones' ***The Spellcoat***. Other fantasy works with related themes include: Ursula LeGuin's ***The Wizard of Earthsea***, Roger Zelazny's ***Nine Princes in Amber***, Lloyd Alexander's ***The Book of Three***, and Madeleine L'Engle's ***A Swiftly Tilting Planet***.

Since reading ***The Hero and the Crown***, I have read all of McKinley's other published work. ***The Blue Sword***, a 1983 Newbery Honor Book, is actually a sequel to the events of ***The Hero and the Crown***. (McKinley plans on writing a whole series of books about Damar.) ***The Blue Sword***, while perhaps not quite as good as ***The Hero and the Crown***, has another fascinating story (which refers to the events of the prequel) featuring another female protagonist — this one struggling to move from one country and one life to others very different. Again, the central issues are personal growth and the making of moral choices.

McKinley has to date published only one other fantasy story, a short story in a collection she edited called ***Imaginary Lands***. The story, "The Stone Fey," is about a girl learning to overcome the pull of magic in order to live her own real life.

Most of McKinley's other works are rewritten, expanded fairy tales, but she has written two original fairy tales. ***Beauty***, perhaps her most famous work, is the expanded version of "Beauty and the Beast." In it, the heroine, like the heroines in McKinley's own fantasy works, has been made into a real person rather than the flat character typical of most fairy tales, and she struggles with many of the same kind of moral dilemmas that McKinley's other heroines do.

McKinley's first book, ***The Door in the Hedge***, contains four more fairy tales, two re-writes and two original stories. "The Princess and the Frog" is the reworking of the Golden Ball story, "The Twelve Dancing Princesses" is the expanded version of the story of the same name, and "The Stolen Princess" and "The Hunting of the Hind" are original works. I found all of these stories to be delightful; their protagonists are realistic characters who gain through their own efforts and who struggle with moral issues.

I like all of Robin McKinley's work and ***The Hero and the Crown*** in particular. I like it because it is always filled with characters who are creatively constructed to deal with real questions of moral and emotional growth. It is fantasy which is well-grounded in reality, and it is fantasy, therefore, which combines the attraction of imaginative, unrealistic worlds with the recognition and satisfaction of the real world. I would not hesitate to recommend any of her work to my fantasy-loving students.

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The Best in Fantasy and Science Fiction: A High-Interest Booklist for Young Adults

PATRICIA HARPER AND CYNTHIA HELMS
CHAMPAIGN PUBLIC LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CENTER

As young adult librarians we feel the need to recommend popular fiction of a higher quality than the formula romances and sensationalist novels favored by so many young people. We recently decided to check through book reviews from such sources as ***Voice of Youth Advocates, School Library Journal,*** and ***Booklist*** to find titles of the best works to consider for special recommendation. We wanted to compile a list of books with high interest for secondary school students and one that would represent a range of reading levels. We focused on the fantasy/science fiction genre since many teenagers are not familiar with even the best known authors in this category.

The following booklist includes our final choices, selected after much reading and comparison. The annotations are geared to the use of students; our aim is to stimulate interest rather than to provide a plot summary or critical review. It has been our experience that teenagers appreciate and use lists that lead them to books of proven appeal.

FANTASY

THE CHANGEOVER: A Supernatural Romance
Margaret Mahy

Laura feels the warning, something bad is going to happen, and it does. Carmondy Braque, a demon, takes possession of Laura's brother Jacko. The only way Laura can save her brother's life is to change over and become a witch, a dangerous and not often successful transformation.

DRAGON'S BLOOD, 243 p.
Jane Yolen

Jakkim Stewart can spend the rest of his life in bondage, cleaning out dragon stalls, or he can steal a dragon's egg from his master. *If* the egg hatches, and *if* Jakkim can train it to be a good fighting dragon, then maybe he can earn enough money to buy his freedom.

DRAGONSONG, 202 p.
Anne McCaffrey

Only chosen men on the planet Pern are allowed to become harpers for the clan, but Menally secretly learns the musical art. Forbidden to sing or

play the harp, Menally does the only thing she can — run away. This is a dangerous act in the time of Threadfall.
Series Note: First book in the Harper Hall Trilogy.

DREAMSNAKE, 319 p.
Vonda McIntyre

The bite of a dreamsnake is a gentle one that brings peaceful sleep and dreams to people in pain. They are rare, though, and after Snake's dreamsnake is killed she knows she can no longer be a healer. On her sad journey home Snake meets a lunatic who is addicted to the bite of a dreamsnake. He claims to know where she can find hundreds of them, if she is willing to take certain risks. . . .

FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, 423 p.
J. R. R. Tolkein

Frodo owns a magic gold ring that once belonged to his uncle Bilbo Baggins. It is the master ring of the Dark Lord, and it must be destroyed to rid Middle Earth of his evil. Even though he has the help of Gandalf, Sam, Merry, Pippin, Strider and others, Frodo's journey to destroy the ring in Mordor is perilous. Many battles are fought because of the ring, and many are won by the Dark Lord.
Series Note: First book in the Lord of the Rings Trilogy. Preceded by ***The Hobbit.***

THE HERO AND THE CROWN, 227 p.
Robin McKinley

Aerin is the king's daughter, but she is mistreated by the court, particularly her cousin, because her mother was a witch. Only after Aerin becomes a dragon slayer does anyone believe she is truly of royal blood and able to save her country.
Series Note: ***The Blue Sword*** is a sequel to this story.

THE ISLE OF GLASS, 276 p.
Judith Tarr

Alfred must make a choice. He can try to save his country from the insanely wicked baron Rhydderich, or he can remain safely hidden in his monastery. Reluctantly, Alfred seeks King Richard's help, even though he knows he will be burned at the stake if his true identity is discovered.
Series Note: Volume one of the Hound and the Falcon Trilogy.

THE LEGEND OF TARIK, 185 p.
Walter Dean Myers

A young African barely survives the slaughter of his village by the evil warrior, El Muerte. The boy is rescued by two old men who train Tarik in the ways of being a knight. Once Tarik has completed his quest for a magic sword, a powerful horse, and the crystal of truth, he seeks out El Muerte.

LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE, 480 p.
Robert Silverberg

The adventurous, romantic saga of a prince and his heroic quest to reclaim his throne and the title of Lord Valentine, Coronal of Majipoor.
Series Note: Volume one of the Majipoor Chronicles.

THE MAGICAL ADVENTURES OF PRETTY PEARL, 309 p.
Virginia Hamilton

Pretty Pearl is a god child anxious to demonstrate her powers to humankind. She leaves Mount Highness in Africa and begins her journey to earth. Pretty is cautioned that the ways of humans can be deceiving. To aid her in times of need, Pretty is given a magical necklace that holds four ancient spirits.

SEWARD, 167 p.
Susan Cooper

Westerly and Cally meet on an adventure-filled quest to the sea. They don't know what will await them there, only that they must make the dangerous journey.

THE SLEEPING DRAGON, 253 p.
Joel Rosenberg

Karl Cullinane and his friends enjoy role-playing games, but they don't realize that for their Dungeon Master, Dr. Deighton, these are not games at all. After Deighton has taught the players all he can about his particularly violent and strange world, he transports them there. Several of Karl's friends will never return.
Series Note: First book in the Guardians of the Flame Trilogy.

A SPELL FOR CHAMELEON, 344 p.
Piers Anthony

Bink is 24 and has not proved yet that he has a magic talent. The Good Magician Humfrey says he has one, but even he can't figure out what it is. Because Xanth is a land where magic rules, Bink will be exiled when he is 25. In Mundania, though, Bink meets the Evil Magician Trent and Chameleon, fellow exiles who help him return to Xanth.
Series Note: Piers Anthony says the Magic of Xanth Trilogy contains eight books because he can't count.

STARSILK, 245 p.
Sydney Van Scyoc

Birnam Rauth is dead. His spirit is calling out to his daughter Reyna, though, from the planet where he died. Reyna is not sorry to leave her home in Valley Terlath to go to him because she was a failure there. On the strange planet of starsilks and forests she may find a life worth living.
Series Note: ***Starsilk*** is preceded by ***Bluesong*** and ***Darkchild.***

SCIENCE FICTION

ARCADE, 332 p.
Robert Maxxe

When the video arcade opens, parents are against it, but the protest soon settles and life goes on as usual. It is only Carrie Foster, a widow with two children, whose suspicions are heightened. The unnatural attraction of the game to children, the strange behavior of its owner, Mr. Peale, and the ultimate death of a 15-year-old boy all lead Carrie to believe that the arcade is much more than mere amusement.

A COMING OF AGE, 292 p.
Timothy Zahn

On the planet Tigris chaldren between the ages of 5 and puberty have telekinetic powers (they can fly and move objects without touching them). The Tigris society is structured and orderly now, but it wasn't always that way. There was social and political chaos on Tigris before adults learned to control the telekinetic powers of children. For 200 years there had been order, but now Lisa Duncan, a pre-teen, learns to read before her time; a scientist, Matthew Jarvis, is experimenting to prolong telekinetic powers into adulthood, and the Prophet Omega, a criminal, is using the telekinetic powers of children for personal gain. They all threaten the Tigris social order.

CONSCIENCE PLACE, 225 p.
Joyce Thompson

The Place is a secret shelter for the mutant offspring of nuclear plant workers. The Place is a government cover-up. People on the outside don't know of its existence, and the people of the Place know nothing of the outside world which created it. The Place is a utopia to its people, but soon it will be invaded by an unknown, uncaring enemy.

DUNE, 255 p.
Frank Herbert

Paul Atreides is destined to become leader of the Fremen on Dune, a planet that has barely enough water for survival, where people are constantly threatened by giant sandworms and savage storms. Still, this planet has great value to many enemies of the Fremen because it is the source of a sacred, addictive spice called melange.

EARTHSEED, 289 p.
Pamela Sargent

Aboard the spaceship lies the genetic material of humankind. The ship is bound for uninhabited planets where the human beings will eventually be placed. Things go wrong, though, and it looks as though Ship will be unable to fulfill its mission. And who will protect humankind from its worst enemy — itself?

EMERGENCE
David Palmer

Nuclear war. Candy is alone, afraid to leave her shelter. She does not want to endanger herself or "retarded twin brother" (a parrot.) Finally, she goes to search for other genetically superior survivors. Others that she finds are happy to see her, but almost get her killed...several times.

ENDER'S GAME, 357 p.
Orson Scott Card

Ender is chosen when he is six to become the person who will save the Earth from the Third Invasion. From then on his life is nothing but war games he must learn to win. Although Ender doesn't know it, his brother and sister are back on Earth playing their own dangerous game.

EON, 502 p.
Greg Bear

Patricia Vasquez, a theoretical mathematician, is called in to investigate the hollow asteroid in orbit around earth. Patricia discovers that the asteroid was made by people from earth — an earth in the past, and that her earth and the one responsible for the asteroid exist in alternate universes. Since the destinies of both earths are linked and one is already destroyed, Patricia becomes part of an epic adventure to save humankind.

EXILES OF COLSEC, 126 p.
Douglas Hill

Twelve teenage offenders from a future earth are being transported to an alien planet to survive or perish. Their chances of survival are slim; six have died already.
Series Note: First in the Colsec Trilogy.

HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, 215 p.
Douglas Adams

When the world is destroyed to make way for an intergalactic highway, what is there to say, except "DON'T PANIC." Arthur Dent, who is almost the last human left alive, hitches a ride on a Vogon spaceship with his nonhuman friend, Ford Prefect. Together they travel to many planets, each one more absurd than the last.
Series Note: First book of The Hitchhiker's Trilogy.

INTERSTELLAR PIG, 192 p.
William Sleator

Get the piggy. That's the object of the game. The game is Interstellar Pig, a space game which Barney wants to learn to play. The three strangers who occupy the vacation cabin next to Barney's have a secret among themselves, a secret which involves the game and Barney. Barney is determined to find out this secret.

MOONSINGER'S FRIENDS: AN ANTHOLOGY IN HONOR OF ANDRE NORTON, 347 p.
Susan Shwartz, editor

If you have enjoyed Andre Norton's books you will like this anthology of 15 short science fiction/fantasy stories written in her honor. The 15 authors represent some of the best contemporary science fiction writers. Each author has written a story that he or she feels Andre Norton would enjoy reading. Stories by Jane Yolen, Anne McCaffrey, Poul Anderson, Jane Carr, and many others are included in the collection.

PRACTICE EFFECT, 288 p.
David Brin

Thanks to a rival named Brady, Dennis Nuel is stranded alone on Coylia, with inferior equipment and no knowledge of the planet's civilization. Dennis ends up in jail, caught between the good guys and bad guys of Coylia, before he begins to understand the Practice Effect that makes the planet so strange.

SHEPHERD MOON, 149 p.
H. M. Hoover

When a colonist from a long forgotten artificial moon returns to Earth, 13-year-old Merry and her grandfather launch a battle to save their culture from the visitor's strange and dangerous power.

SINGULARITY, 170 p.
William Sleator

While visiting their great-uncle's farm, sixteen-year-old twins Harry and Barry discover the weird old family playhouse — a passage to another world.

TUNNEL IN THE SKY, 214 p.
Robert A. Heinlein

To pass Course 410, Advanced Survival, Rod Walker and the other students only have to pass the final exam. They just have to live on an alien planet for 10 days. Those who survive the first few terrifying hours think they have no problems, but something goes wrong. As weeks pass without rescue Rod and his partners have to accept they may never leave this planet.

WATER WITCH, 216 p.
Cynthia Felice and Connie Willis

Deza and her father con rich men by passing Deza off as a princess, the last true water witch. After her father dies, though, Deza gets in real trouble. As she fights to make a Tycoon, his son, and a prince believe she is the witch, Deza discovers that her father has conned even her.

YURTH BURDEN, 206 p.
Andre Norton

Elossa and Stans are from two different races; the Yurths, whose ancestors invaded Zacar many years ago, and the Raski, who hate the Yurths for destroying their civilization. Even though they hate each other, Elossa and Stans are forced to face a dangerous enemy and complete their quests together.

NOTE: Copies of this booklist, with the illustrated cover and suggestions for additional authors, are available for $.50 to cover postage and handling from the Champaign Public Library and Information Center/505 S. Randolph/Champaign, IL 61820. Please send requests to Cynthia Helms. For requests of more than 10 copies, please contact Ms. Helms for a lower cost.

Appealing Nonfiction

Norma Gardner
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High school students frequently regard nonfiction as boring and dull. They rarely view it as pleasurable leisure reading. Last year, however, when I taught an individualized reading class offered to juniors and seniors, many students chose nonfiction. The most popular of these concerned the experiences of three women in their work with emotionally disturbed children. Mary MacCracken, Eleanor Craig, and Torey L. Hayden all realistically portray the poignant drama of dealing with such troubled children and trying to help them cope with their worlds.

Mary MacCracken's first two books, ***A Circle of Children*** and ***Lovey,*** chronicle her teaching in a private school. Her third book, ***City Kid,*** centers on her work as a graduate student in a special project and her meeting with a seven-year-old boy already in trouble with the law.

The role of special education teachers in public schools is revealed in Eleanor Craig's ***P. S. You're Not Listening*** and two of Torey Hayden's books, ***Somebodys Else's Kids*** and ***One Child.*** Both these authors eventually left classroom teaching to become clinical therapists, a move reflected in their later books. ***One, Two, Three*** is Craig's account of a case which required her to work with a family in order to free a boy from an unhealthy dependency. Her most recent book, ***If We Could Hear the Grass Grow,*** describes the experiences she had with three of her four children as staff members of a summer daycamp program for twelve disturbed youngsters. Torey Hayden's ***Murphy's Boy*** details her involvement with an adolescent who was institutionalized for most of his life.

My students enjoyed these books because of their realism. The authors do not gloss over brutal details of the children's lives, nor do they attempt to hide failures and disappointments. One of the most important facets of their books is the illustration of the necessity of both loving and letting go of these special children. These authors give glimpses of their personal lives and share their feelings openly. Several of my students wrote papers based on these books and went on to read nonfiction works in other areas after their introduction to these three authors.

The Way We Will Be: The Search for Gender Identity in Young Adult Books

Judith Rosenfeld
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The young adult's search to establish a satisfactory concept of gender is not a new phenomenon. Psychologists have long identified achieving a masculine and feminine social role and achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes as the primary developmental tasks during the teenage years. Recently more and more educators have introduced human sexuality to the curriculum. But young people have always worked towards establishing a personal sense of self during the ages of 13-21. These are the crucial years when they become less dependent on their parents, and more independent emotionally, socially, and economically.

What has changed is the number and variety of decisions students must make as their choices grow. The books in this bibliography do not supply all the answers, but they will evoke the following questions in each reader:

(1) What characteristics identify and ensure masculinity/femininity?
(2) How do I expect to be treated by male and female friends?
(3) What must I be like to have male and female friends?
(4) Is it acceptable to be different from other young men and women?
(5) In a single-parent home, who will be my role models?

In the literature classroom, young adults will be able to discuss these concerns in ways which help them to hear the opinions of classmates, and to realize that their fears and interests are shared by others. The readers will grow as the book characters reach their conclusions, not magically achieving perfection, but providing a safe base from which to launch questions. Some of these books provide role models for the 80's, nurturing males and daring females. Others show young people dealing individually with life problems created by adults.

All the books are recommended for teaching, that is — for reading in a group setting with a teacher to guide understanding

through discussion, and through assignments in writing and collateral reading.

1. Bach, Alice. ***The Meat in the Sandwich.*** Harper, 1975.

   Several forces hit this middle-class family of the 70's at once: Mike, the middle child between two sisters becomes involved in an athletic competition as the path away from being a "nerd"; his mother's consciousness is raised, and she convinces the family to share the mundane chores of the household; the males of the new family next-door are the lord and masters and the wife is the "Queen" — protected, but the one who does all the housework. The role of athletics — and winning — in a boy's life and in a girl's life is also discussed. Ideas are thoughtfully interwoven through the conversations and events of the story and are there for the reader to construct his/her own conclusions.

2. Conrad, Pam. ***Prairie Songs.*** Harper, 1985.

   The Nebraska prairie is not a hospitable place for settlers, even for those fully capable of adjustments. Without personal stamina and loving family support, an individual can easily be overwhelmed and defeated by the isolation, emptiness, and extremes of weather. The Downing family, Momma, Poppa, Louisa, and Lester, learn to live in sod houses with bare earth floors and roofs that leak after two days of rain, to burn buffalo dung chips in their fire, and to plant tiny seedlings which they know will one day become trees. Life is hard, but most of the people and most of the trees will endure. But when Dr. and Mrs. Berryman come from New York City to live in the nearest soddy, the wife, Emmaline, is unable to adjust, just as her husband is unable to give her the support she requires.

3. Fox, Pauline. ***The Moonlight Man.*** Bradbury Press, 1986.

   Catherine knows her father is unpredictable and unreliable, but she discovers the fullness of his personality as a human being, a man, a writer, and a father, while she lives with him in a cottage in Nova Scotia for one month, the longest period of time they have shared since her parents separated twelve years earlier. Catherine recognizes his weakness but also realizes that even though Harry Ames could not fit the husband role which her mother required, he is nevertheless worthy of being loved by his daughter. In one summer, Catherine learns about herself as an independent person and begins to make decisions about important relationships in her life.

4. Hamilton, Virginia. ***A Little Love.*** Philomel, 1984.

   Because Hamilton's books are always about extended families, relationships are complex: Sheema, a 17-year-old girl is "overweight on the outside, but just a skinny young lady on the inside." She lives with her elderly grandparents whose love for each other is everlasting — 37 years, and the last year was the best, they say. They have cared for Sheema ever since her mother died in childbirth and her dad, a sign painter, left without ever seeing his daughter. Sheema's boyfriend is one of Hamilton's unique characters, a warm, caring friend, supportive of Sheema's hopes and protective of her fears. Understanding Sheema's need to find her father, he willingly makes the arrangements for their

journey of discovery not only to find her father but also to find out about love.

5. L'Engle, Madeleine. ***A House Like a Lotus.*** FS & G, 1984.

Sixteen-year-old Polly O'Keefe, in Athens on a stopover before she travels to Cyprus to work at an international conference, tries hard to put from her mind Max Horne, the woman artist whose friendship has meant everything to her before that climactic evening just before Polly's departure. At home in South Carolina, in Athens, and later in Cyprus, Polly meets a variety of men and women who demonstrate that there are many ways to express love. At a dinner table conversation, Dr. and Mrs. O'Keefe discuss Max and her friend Ursula's purported lesbian relationship in a way that will be important for adolescent readers to discuss. They say, "We human beings are all in the enterprise of life, and the journey isn't easy for any of us." At this point in her development — and the reader realizes that Polly will continue to grow and learn about love — Polly discovers that "To deny friendship is unlove." This is a difficult and complex story, but L'Engle's talent and skill succeed masterfully.

6. Myers, Walter Dean. ***Motown and Didi: A Love Story.*** Viking, 1984.

Didi, named that because her father thought that it was "cute" just before he left their Harlem home, yearns to escape. She has to worry about poverty, drudgery, the pregnancies which begin early and continue endlessly, her mother's illness, her father's desertion, her brother's "habit," and the litany goes on. When she meets Motown, he seems to be very much a part of everything she wants to avoid: he has no steady job, he lives in an abandoned gutted house, and he is not in school. Myers supplies no magical answers in this story, but neither does he take the easy path of creating another Romeo-Juliet situation. Didi and Motown are survivors who will not lose by default. A wonderful character, the Professor, provides the inspiration for them and the readers. Didi is a strong female who works to save her brother, and Motown is physically and emotionally powerful because he has learned he must be strong or be defeated. Myers leaves the reader with an open ending to be resolved in class discussion and in the individual imagination.

7. Oneal, Zibby. ***In a Summer Light.*** Viking, 1985.

Many books have been written about this "Electra" complex — the love of a young girl for her father, a love which dominates her ego development and overrides other relationships. When a girl faces this domination, she feels anger for her father, feels in conflict with him, and often turns away from him, completely. The mother often adds to these feelings by using the love of the daughter to help build her husband's self-esteem. Consequently, the daughter underestimates her mother's love for her ***and*** for her father. In this way, Marcus Brewer, a famous artist, has overwhelmed his wife and daughter, but when Ian Jackson, a graduate student, spends his summer at the Brewers' home, feelings fall into persepective. A thoughtful book, good to connect with Yolen's ***The Stone Silenus*** and Shreve's ***Masquerade.***

8. Paterson, Catherine. ***Come Sing, Jimmy Jo.*** Dutton, 1985.

Jimmy Jo Johnson belongs to a family of country singers who are fast becoming successful entertainers on the country music circuit. As Jimmy Jo finds the courage to perform, his dad becomes the nuturing parent; his mother, Olive, now calling herself "Keri Su," is so thoroughly involved in the excitement of her career that she no longer has time for her son. He is confronted by a man who claims to be his "real father," but there is no sensationalized abduction; the man simply expresses his desire to know his son. The love Jimmy Jo shares with his grandma is realistically and unabashedly described in this story of the loving support that an extended family can give.

9. Perez, N. A. ***One Special Year.*** Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985.

A great many changes come to the McAlister family at the turn of the century, a special year in the life of 14-year-old Jen McAlister. When the year started she was "too old to be rocked and too young to join the adult conversation" but Jen, "busy growing," strives to understand her feelings about her father, mother, brother, and sister, and also about Davey Sawyer, a schoolmate and special friend. It is difficult for a teenage girl to view her father and mother objectively, but Jen's ideas about them do an about-turn during the year when her uncle breaks her mother's heart, Gram dies, and a young widow returns to disrupt the family balance. Many people and events converge to teach Jen about life and being a woman; she learns that growing up is "seeing things as they are."

10. Singer, Marilyn. ***The Horsemaster.*** Atheneum, 1985.

A time fantasy, this adventure belongs to Jessica who is a very unhappy young teenager, eternally engaged in a verbal battle with her mother, who has closed the door on any discussion of the husband/father who walked out on them many years before. Jack, Jessica's one friend, is also rebelling against his parents; it seems both seek opportunities to get even and to hurt their parents. Riding with Jack on a motorcycle he has "borrowed," Jessica finds a woven tapestry of a chestnut horse, Gabdon. A Magus appears who takes the young people to the land of the Horsemaster, where Jessica is to be the Messenger who can bring the country to order and peace. The time shifts in this exciting adventure are well handled through the tapestry, and the fantasy situation is a metaphor for the discord in the lives of Jessica and Jack. As they find the solution in another time and place, they understand each other and their parents.

11. Voight, Cynthia. ***Solitary Blue.*** Atheneum, 1985.

Jeff lives cautiously with his father, the Professor, after his mother, Melody, leaves them to work for "good causes." Jeff, who above all wants to keep his father with him, assumes the burden of maintaining order in his father's life, especially since Melody has warned him that the Professor does not "like change." Voight avoids all sexual role stereotyping, since the mother and the father both nurture and neglect Jeff, as they seek to fulfill their own needs for love and support. Dicey and the rest of the Tillerman family — from Voight's ***Dicey's Song***

— appear briefly and serve as a counterpoint to Jeff's own struggle. An interesting topic for class discussion is how the misdeeds and mistakes of their parents will affect Dicey and Jeff, and how they are stronger because of the way they have dealt with the behavior of their parents.

12. Yolen, Jane. ***The Stone Silenus.*** Philomel, 1984.

Melissa, 15-years-old when her poet father, Joshua Stanhold, dies, struggles to hold on to his presence as she walks the Montauk beach remembering his voice reciting his poetry to her. When Gabriel appears through the fog, calling her "Issa," her father's pet name for her, Melissa becomes certain that he is a reincarnation of her father. Joshua Stanhold, who had created the role of Pan for himself, an ageless faun, had been unable to accept a loss of youth and vigor, just as Melissa is unable to accept his death. A dying seagull helps Melissa understand change as a part of life, including a change in her perception of her mother and her father.

Increasing Sensitivity to Sex Role Stereotyping: Classroom Exercises and Discussion Questions

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When my colleague Judith Rosenfeld, author of the preceding article, asked my help in preparing classroom activities to use in conjunction with her booklist on gender identity, I decided first to increase student sensitivity to sex role stereotypes through adapting ideas from a useful book: Ahlum and Fralley's ***High School Feminist Studies,*** published by The Feminist Press. My adaptation is followed by sample study questions, which can be used as the basis of class discussion or writing assignments. I chose these samples because they deal with two of the most useful books from Rosenfeld's list: Walter Deay Myers' ***Motown and Didi*** and Cynthia Voigt's ***A Solitary Blue.***

Classroom Activities for Discussing Sex Role Stereotypes in Our Society

1. Ask students to draw, on newsprint, a picture of their mothers, and underneath list roles they see mothers in. Do the same for fathers. Place all drawings on the wall or board and discuss.

Sample discussion questions:

a. Do you notice any similarities in the drawings? In the words?
b. What kinds of roles are the women shown in? Men?
c. At home, who has "inside jobs"? "outside jobs"?
d. What do you intend to do/be when you grow up?

2. Have students list as many words as they can think of which they associate with each sex. These could be written on the board or copied for each student. In small groups or as a class, students can discuss the significance of the words which appear on each list: which are positive words, which negative, which have sexual connotations, etc.

Additional questions:

a. What do these findings show how we view men and women in this society?
b. What are some sources of these images that you can think of?

3. Listen to popular songs or read their lyrics in class. Analyze the images of females and males portrayed in music today.
4. Collect magazine ads and discuss the portrayal of girls/women and boys/men.
5. Videotape a portion of a popular television show or current film. Discuss the presentation of female and male roles.

Questions for Writing about and Discussing *Motown and Didi* by Walter Deay Myers (Viking, 1984)

1. What characteristics identify masculinity in Touchy's street gang? (Look at Touchy, Reggie, and Tony for specifics.)
2. How might Touchy's childhood experiences of conflict with a harsh, ungiving father have influenced the man Touchy became?
3. How do Motown's behavior and values differ from the conventional role represented by Touchy, Reggie, and Tony?
4. Motown's last foster mother, who had decided to give him up, told him, "If you don't look out for yourself, ain't nobody gonna look out for you boy." What effect did these words have on the boy?
5. Imagine that you are Motown, and write an interior monologue showing how your view of your "home" in the abandoned building changes after Didi has visited and questioned your living there when you could afford an apartment.
6. How does Didi define herself? What are her highest values? Pretend you are Didi writing a college application which requires you to answer these two questions.
7. Didi worried about her mother's nighttime wanderings on the Harlem streets, because she is a woman and therefore more vulnerable, and Didi later faces this same vulnerability. What are the realities of being a woman in Harlem? How do you think these realities might shape the attitudes of girls/women living there?
8. Restate in your own words the Professor's message to Motown about his black brothers and sisters in Harlem: "The tribe has got to have the numbers and strength of each person... when you see members of the tribe falling by the wayside, you have to understand that that's part

of you falling there." What are the implications of the Professor's words for how Motown should behave towards others? What would be your reactions to the Professor's teachings?

9. Didi says about Motown, "men can never say what they mean." Do you agree to any extent with this statement? Why or why not? Are women/girls different in this respect? Use specific examples from your own experience to support your opinions.
10. Describe Didi's relationship with her mother. Compare and contrast this to mother-daughter relationships you are familiar with.
11. Imagine that you are Tony and, in a particularly clear-headed moment, you decide to write a letter to your sister before you go to the drug rehabilitation counselor. Explain how you feel about yourself, and the pressures you have been under which lead you to drugs.
12. What traits do Mowtown and Didi love in each other? Do you think their characters complement one another?
13. Motown had dreamed of performing a heroic act, reaching for a moment of greatness. "Now when someone had to speak about how the tribe should be, and how a man had to be with a woman, Motown would lift his voice, and his arm (to kill Touchy). It would be his gift." Explain how Motown rationalizes his decision to kill Touchy.
14. "All you young men are warriors," the Professor had said. "You walk these streets testing your manhood, seeing who is the best. And the bad thing is you're afraid to back down because you're boxed in. The tenements box you in, the fire escapes make cages for you. But you're fighting for what you should be sharing. These Harlem streets belong to all of us. You earned your share when you were born black. That's when you earned your share. When we going to learn that? When we going to learn it?"
"You know, if you back down, people gonna say you a punk," Motown had said, knowing it wasn't what the Professor wanted to hear.
"A punk? You don't see white men out in the streets fighting and killing their own, do you?" the Professor had asked. "That's not how they prove their manhood. They prove theirs in the stock market, on the job, in politics."
"If you can't be no man the way they do it," Motown said, "you got to be one the best way you can."

In your own words explain the Professor's attitude about how Harlem Blacks should interact? How does Motown's attitude differ? Why do white men choose different ways to prove themselves? How much actual choice is involved?

Topics for Writing about and Discussing *A Solitary Blue* by Cynthia Voigt (Atheneum, 1985)

1. Compare the home settings Jeff's mother and father provide for him. What does each offer? What does each lack?
2. Describe the character of the Professor's and Jeff's friend, Brother Thomas. What role does Brother Thomas play for Jeff as he grows up?
3. Compose a diary entry from Jeff's point of view about what his first visit to Melody awakens in him.

4. Explain what Jeff is feeling when he decides to become his mother's faithful knight, even if he doesn't see her for years, as was sometimes true with "knights of old."
5. Write a song that Jeff might have composed about his mother and his feelings for her.
6. In what ways does Jeff become like his father? How does Jeff try to hold himself back or alter his behavior to be acceptable to his father?
7. Jeff discovers that, like his mother, he has a talent for knowing what people are feeling. How does this affect his sense of responsibility toward others, such as his father, Brother Thomas, or Dicey?
8. Write an interior monologue showing Jeff's thoughts and feelings when he discovers that Melody lies to him, doesn't want to be with him during his visit, and would rather be with her lover, Max.
9. Explain how Jeff uses his fear of the rowboat and the wild island he explores. What does he find out after his night on the island?
10. Imagine you are Jeff, as an adult, talking to his own child about his father. Explain to your son how your view of your father, the Professor, changed as you grew.
11. How does Jeff win the trust of Dicey?
12. Explain how both Dicey and Jeff are stronger because of the ways they have dealt with the behavior of their parents.
13. Jeff discovers that what he likes about the Tillermans is the person he becomes around them. Relate this to your own experience with a person or people who make you become someone you really like.
14. How are Dicey and Jeff each like the solitary great blue heron?

No More Plot Summaries: Teaching Critical Focus in Independent Reading Responses

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Are you devoting so much attention to writing instruction these days that you've been neglecting to require much independent reading from your students? Or perhaps you've purposely avoided making outside reading assignments because you dread dealing with the tiresome book reports that inevitably follow. With good reason: typically these reports consist of plot summaries punctuated by an occasional critical comment and conclude with an unsupported personal opinion. Of course, they are lethally boring

to read — and surely equally boring for students to write. By requesting a different kind of response, you can stimulate independent reading, avoid those dreary plot summaries, and teach critical thinking in the bargain.

Instead of an outside reading "report," try asking your students to write a brief paper focusing on some literary criterion — character, point of view, setting, imagery, or structure — and to conclude with their understanding of the meaning of the work. In other words, offer them the challenge of writing critically about their independent reading rather than describing or summarizing it.

But how, then, do you keep the weaker students from lapsing into plot summary as they get tired of thinking and run short of critical insights? Provide this simple requirement: tell them that they must begin each paragraph (except the introduction and the conclusion) with a sentence making a critical observation, not just with a plot detail. They will use the plot details to support those critical generalizations.

You will, of course, have to help some students understand the difference between a critical comment and a plot detail. The best way to illustrate the distinction involves using the chalkboard. You need to make up ahead of time a few examples of topic sentences employing only a plot detail. (Or borrow the ones used to illustrate this article, if your students know the literary works referred to.) Then, one at a time, write these sentences on the board and ask the class to revise each statement to give it a critical thrust. Tell them that the sentence needs to make a point about the literary work, not merely repeat what it says (what anyone who has read the piece would know). In order to give them the idea, you may need to revise a few sentences yourself on the board, like this:

Plot detail:	The story begins when Huck finds Jim on Jackson's Island.
Critical comment:	Huck realizes the value of human companionship after he finds Jim hiding out on Jackson's Island.
Plot detail:	The last trick Huck plays on Jim is when he fools him into thinking the storm of the previous night was all a dream.
Critical comment:	From the last trick he plays on Jim, Huck learns to see Jim as a human being.
Plot detail:	Jackson's story opens on a balmy summer day.
Critical comment:	By setting her story on a balmy summer day, Jackson creates a false sense of well-being.

Plot detail: The oiler, who dies, was the strongest of the four men in the boat.

Critical comment: The oiler's death is ironic because it upsets our expectations of survival of the fittest.

Once the class has caught on to the difference, discuss with them which details from the literary work would best serve to support one of the critical observations. You might want to flesh out the whole paragraph on the board as the students supply the plot details they think are important to use in proving the point. Let them see you scratch out or erase a sentence if someone comes up with a better piece of evidence or a more effective way to arrange the details. Let them see you changing words as you press them to think of the best possible word choice. Let them see you moving modifiers and combining sentences as you encourage them to find ways to produce the most effective structures.

Sometimes sharpening critical focus involves nothing more than sentence combining. Often a student will begin a paragraph with a plot detail in the first sentence followed by a critical comment in the second sentence, like this:

Plot detail: There is one character who is never actually present in the story.

Critical comment: The character is Barclay Goodson, and he acts as a foil for the townspepole of Hadleyburg.

As you combine the sentences on the board, point out to your students the importance of putting the plot detail in a subordinate position and the critical observation in the main clause:

Combined: Although he is a character who never actually appears in the story, Barclay Goodson acts as a foil for the townspeople of Hadleyburg.

Here are some more examples:

Plot detail: The dog knows better than to go out in weather fifty below zero.

Critical comment: The dog serves as a foil for the foolish man.

Combined: The dog, who knows better than to go out in weather fifty below zero, serves as a foil for the foolish man.

Plot detail: The first section of the story describes the preparations for hanging Peyton Farquhar.

Critical comment: These descriptions represent the world of cruel reality.

Combined: The first section of the story, describing the preparations for hanging Peyton Farquhar, represents the world of cruel reality.

If you are teaching beginning students who have difficulty in thinking of critical comments, you might want to list on the board ten or fifteen significant plot details and then ask the class to supply a meaningful statement about each one. As a written exercise, to be done individually or in groups, you could devise sample sentences that include only plot details from stories recently studied, followed (or preceded) by a sentence that incorporates a related critical observation. Ask the students first to identify in the left-hand margin each sentence as either "plot" (plot detail) or "crit" (critical comment). Then, ask them to combine each pair of related sentences by subordinating the plot detail and putting the critical point in the main clause. Since they will undoubtedly use various structures in combining the sentences, you could then have the class discuss which sentences they consider the most effective and why.

This instruction seems perhaps, in Wordsworth's phrase, "to murder to dissect" — seems perhaps to make mechanical a procedure which is essentially creative. But even good students profit from understanding their intuitive writing processes. And those who had not before grasped the idea of maintaining critical focus may be transformed into competent writers of literary papers. Best of all, if the instruction takes, you will be spared from reading dozens of tedious plot summaries when you assign outside reading responses — or, for that matter, whenever you require any kind of writing about literature.

From Independent Study to Term Paper

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Four or five years ago, I decided to incorporate an independent study plan into my advanced junior English class. The plan has been modified each year, but the basic idea has remained the same: the students read works in common for class discussion concurrent with their "outside reading." Along the way, I have gradually strengthened the natural connection between their favorite independent reading and their term paper. Of course, the first year

of any experiment has to be the most fun, and this time was no exception.

I unfolded my plan cautiously by first reading aloud July Harding's article, "A Truly Independent Study" (***English Journal***, Sept. '81). She had had success with a maverick student by turning him loose in the library, requiring only a simple reporting system. Perhaps my students would relate.

I then asked my students if they would like to spend a period every week with me in the library. Would they like to read some well-known American literature of their own choice as an extra preparation for college? Could we experiment? Mary glanced up from her letter to her boyfriend to grade my strange behavior. A teacher bearing gifts? I spoke over her gaze.

Once a week I would collect a couple of pages of their reactions: informal questions, aggravations, observations. I would respond in notes and in person. At the end of nine weeks, I wanted a five-page, typed if possible, summary of their reactions, organized, with attached bibliography. Mary leaned back and smiled: she'd known all along there would be a catch. (Still . . . she'd been given an Anne Sexton poetry book for Christmas and hadn't had time to more than crack it.)

This would be a tentative plan (I crept on) subject to instant revision (the escape route). We would spend some time in the library and some in class discussing their outside reading, sharing. Most days, however, we would be discussing the works we read together. We stared at each other while the full realization that I was asking them to read class assignments and "outside" material concurrently settled over the room. They looked sidelong at each other, but the lure of free reading must have been too strong. They liked the idea. We decided to try it for nine weeks. We spent one period a week in the library finding materials, sharing, and at the end of the quarter, we unanimously voted to continue, but most said they needed only one day every other week in the library — when the books were due. (Mary wanted two a week.) A day every week, they said, led to too much small talk (probably mine, since I usually walked around and stirred things up).

Regardless, supported by a brief list of "Well-Known American Authors," to use only as a springboard, and a bibliography of reference works in our library for a taste of secondary sources, they took the dive. Because I knew they needed time for the independent study material, we read only two novels as a class that semester, ***The Scarlet Letter*** and ***Huckleberry Finn***, each spread over three or four weeks; but we did manage numerous

plays, poems, short essays, and stories that could be read aloud. The students turned in three questions apiece for each discussion period so I could, in the course of the discussion, work in some guidelines for interpretation and some literary background for perspective. I never lectured; their only "tests" were impromptu essays comparing, contrasting, and analyzing both their classroom assignments and outside reading.

Evaluation was easy, but comparison almost impossible. I became involved with each one's particular struggle. In the time it took Mark to read ***Moby Dick***, others had read three novels by Willa Cather or five short stories and fourteen poems. The quality of their perceptions and deductions was a shifting and growing thing. Finally I decided, as Scarlet did, to think about grades tomorrow. Sporadically, they worried too, though not as much as I expected. How MUCH should I read? As much as you can. WHAT do I write about in my journal? Your reactions, as specifically as possible. How are you GRADING? I stalled them with an innocuous smile and answered their questions about their writing with some of my own, distributing a mimeographed copy of the following: (1) Any common themes in your works? (2) Did you agree or disagree with any of them? (3) Did you notice any specific elements of good writing? (Characterizations, descriptive detail, imagery, plot structure, point of view, other?) (4) Can you compare or contrast any of the characters or works in a specific way? (5) Did you learn any new vocabulary, concepts? (6) Did your reading cause you to ask any new questions or disturb your opinions? (7) Did you gain any new insights that will help you understand people or events better?

Their final reports were a joy to read. The grades were high, but then, I reasoned carefully, I had learned so much! I was particularly fascinated by their modus operandi, as varied as their personalities and stages of development. I saved these papers and must share a few priceless comments.

Some, like Jenny, attempted the sensible, nutritional, genre approach. She wrote, "I've tried to read a 'balanced diet' of works — novels, short stories, poems and essays." As it worked out, however, Jenny became enthralled with ***The Good Earth*** for quite some time. She explained, "I've also been motivated to go off the book to investigate processes or objects which I did not know about before. For example, I looked up 'concubinage,' 'foot binding' and rules for divorce in ancient China . . . which could be sources for reports in future classes." Eventually she moved on to some short stories and poems, but I think Pearl S. Buck has another life-long fan.

Some chose an overall theme. Carla was hot on the track of her latest obsession: "I would never have had the chance to read female authors if I had read only what is required in the classroom since very few of the requirements were written by women. (Look into that, Mrs. Geiser.) Wow! I'm glad I had the chance." Carla read Cather's ***A Lost Lady,*** Hellman's ***The Children's Hour,*** Toni Morrison's ***Song of Solomon,*** and ***The Poisoned Kiss and Other Stories From the Portugeuse*** by Joyce Carol Oates. At loose ends, she finished off with ***The Glass Menagerie*** after hearing people talk about Amanda and Laura. She had to admit to the world: "I realized a man IS capable of portraying a woman's life . . . though the man must be sensitive and clear headed."

Debbie created her own approach. She read Doctorow's ***Ragtime,*** turned it slowly, and used it as an axis for her wheel. She discussed a major theme it had in common with ***Huckleberry Finn,*** racial prejudice; she compared it to ***The Great Gatsby*** in its main purpose, "to make a statement about life and people showing disappointment in the human race." She compared the method or structure to ***The Scarlet Letter:*** "Both authors imagined circumstances around real events." When her wheel came to rest, she concluded, "It is easy to see why I was so impressed by the novel, ***Ragtime,*** since it contains so many of the elements found in famous works."

I loved Susan's purpose: "I was determined to find the key to the mystery of 'good writing' that these authors obviously have." Like Thoreau at Walden Pond, her findings were lovely: "excellent descriptive detail" and "themes that relate to us." She read ***Ship of Fools,*** a collection of modern short stories, and some poems. Her course led her trippingly, yet undaunted, through all the artificial barriers of genre in her quest to pull together common elements of "good writing." She especially liked Porter's Lizzi: "Rearranged . . . as if she were a jointed doll." Without taking a breath, Susie moved through poems finding wonderfully visual and metaphorical passages, concluding that without such language "literature would be very boring."

Then there were those who felt little necessity to structure ahead of time. They wandered, stopped in the middle, started elsewhere: comparing and contrasting apples and tangerines, sometimes awkwardly, sometimes with startling originality and honesty. Mary was one of those. In one of her early "reaction" entries about poetry, she declared, "Anne Sexton and Longfellow were the only two I really enjoyed. . . . the rest were a real snooze." Longfellow? ZZZZZZZZZ. . . . Later she confided, "Un-

fortunately, ***As I Lay Dying*** became a little too slow and perhaps too deep for me. I moved on to the poems of Emily Dickinson. I am continually amazed at Emily Dickinson's intense perception. E. D. writes with a style and eloquence that doesn't get in the way of original, clear thought. That, to me, is the epitome of poetry." Ahhh yes.... After immersing herself in Anne Sexton's poetry and emerging rather fed up with Anne's depression, Mary's reaction really knocked me out. "Anne Sexton makes me think of Hester Prynne's admonishment to Pearl not to speak of the things that happen in the forest aloud in the marketplace!" What a leap!

Their final papers contained comments I should frame to cheer me up on institute days. Art said, "I actually was enjoying what I was reading and teaching myself.... Because I was forced to write opinions, not just retellings of plot, I began to recognize themes and understand the authors' purposes." And Jean wrote, "I tried real hard to stay away from Edgar Allan Poe, but the man is just like a magnet. Everytime I'm in the library I turn and look and a book of his is just ready to fall off the shelf. So I take it. I can't help it."

Of course, over the last five years I have continued to experiment with variations on this activity and have used independent study in conjunction with other goals in other classes; however, the only major differences in procedure with my juniors is that now the students put their comments directly on notecards rather than in notebooks first. Their comments must be accompanied by some support in the form of a quotation or paraphrased opinion along with a page number and a letter which corresponds to a bibliography card. They have to put a slug, or subtopic, on the notecard. This way they are forced to start organizing their material sooner. Also, the research procedure becomes more natural and not something connected only with the big bad word, TERM PAPER. They soon understand their opinions must be supported and that other people's opinions may be respected or contradicted, but must always be acknowledged.

I believe the major reason independent study has proved successful for my students, whether used as a springboard for term papers or as a separate activity in lower ability classes, is that the method is inherently inductive. The process gives the students the opportunity to teach thtemselves, which is, I submit, the only way it ever gets done.

Lord of the Flies: A Cooperative Approach

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Dissection gets messy in the English classroom. After all, sinks are nonexistent and some of our methods primitive. But we persist in trying to sharpen our students' analytical skills, and after novel units, we collect the "dismeaninged" paperbacks and — hoping their wounds will heal — put them on the shelf until next year.

Looking at those shelves of bruised books one August afternoon while feeling like a holistic practitioner, I decided to give Golding a new treatment. Under no one's influence or guidance, I proceeded. The results were immediate and positive; however, the above title took me two years and a graduate course bibliography on cooperative learning to find. As the name implies, cooperative learning eliminates competition and encourages students to find answers together. Because the fictional situation depicted in ***Lord of the Flies*** is really an example of cooperative learning, the novel seemed a perfect work with which to experiment.

SITUATION: My students *became* the boys stranded on the island. As I explained to them, "You are a group of adolescents who have been stranded in an uninhabited classroom. Instead of gathering food and making a fire you must study ***Lord of the Flies***. On the teacher's desk are materials which need to be distributed and discussed." After we established the situation, I faded into the peeling paint. No longer was I the benevolent authority: I had relinquished most of my control. After staring at me incredulously for a few seconds and then looking truly lost, my students decided to go for it while they had the chance. It would have been a good time to spell the word "anarchy" into Helen Keller's hands. Fortunately, I had planned well and provided students with . . .

GUIDELINES: A word educators befriend? Doing just that, but also maintaining consistency with the situation, I instructed my students, "You must stay in the classroom during the set time period for this class: it *is* your island. Lessons on the desk must be completed: they *are* your fire to maintain and food to find. There will be times when I need to lecture or give a specific assignment; you must respect that. You are basically free to organize the room,

discussions, and homework the way you wish. Consider me as a resource who will be providing materials and possible answers; however, I need to receive a list of absentees each day and graded assignments. Even though you have some new freedoms, you must still adhere to the rules in the ***Student-Parent Handbook***." (Yes, I know, scientists would laugh at the simulation, but responsibility and liability are powerful influencers.) These guidelines were explained before we actually began the experiment and I gave students a handout which outlined the situation, guidelines, our schedule of activities, and the following objectives.

OBJECTIVES: This list is a compilation of standard novel study objectives, objectives from Perfection Form's Teacher Guide for ***Lord of the Flies,*** and my own goals for students. As I told them, "In addition to understanding the structural elements of a novel, character development, symbolism, etc., it is hoped you will accomplish the following:

1. Gain a better understanding of why Golding viewed man as inherently evil.
2. Discover whether or not your "good conduct" is dependent upon the fact that someone is watching you.
3. Discover whether you are more of a leader or a follower.
4. Discover if you are inclined to be a constructive (giving) or destructive (taking) individual in society.
5. Gain a better understanding of the relationship between freedom and responsibility.
6. Apply these understandings (1-5) to other areas of your life to enrich it."

As you can see, these are not quantitative objects nor are they intended to be. I provided them to students as a guide for their thinking. In my mind, measurement is not always necessary, but a purpose is, and students need to be aware of the purpose of a particular assignment. These objectives provided a purpose or reason for the given situation and even for occasional anarchy.

We spent three weeks with this unit. For three days I lectured or guided a discussion for one-half hour to help keep students focused on the objectives and to introduce terminology, new information, or questions. I also included in this unit some informal research: students selected a philosopher from a list I provided, did some reading of his philosophy, and summarized it in a one-page paper. Then they shared their research with other class members by giving brief, informal oral reports. In addition to an exam, another evaluative tool for this unit was a writing activity in which each student analyzed his/her own behavior and contributions during the unit: this helped students think about objectives

two through four. My question to them for this essay: "Which character in ***Lord of the Flies*** did your behavior most resemble? Explain this by giving specific examples both of your behavior during this unit and of the character's behavior."

Judging from the essays, there was a lot of gaining and discovering taking place during the three-week unit; for example,

> I think I'm most like Ralph in the book because... he's self-conscious every once in a while and I'm self-conscious every once in a while. **Amy R.**
>
> I think I'm intellectual like Piggy because I see things that other people don't like Piggy did when he knew that the fires must be kept under close watch and the shelters must be built on the beach. **Mike P.**
>
> Piggy is most like me when he tried so hard to help but everyone pushed him away. He was an easy target for people to make fun of and I was a target of jokes too at one time. **Chris O.**
>
> I think that I was most like Ralph during our society because I tried to get things organized from the beginning and keep them that way, but towards the end of the society I began to lose control and leadership of our group. **Kenny S.**
>
> I think I am most like Piggy because... it takes me a long time to get people to listen to me and I am not included in many social groups as he was not. There are a few good points that we share; they are intelligence and the ability to come up with quick ideas. **Sherry J.**

An added insight for me was noticing the improved quality of students' writing when they had an experience from which to draw details. The honesty and objectivity also amazed me: students did not seem at all afraid to claim the negative attributes of the fictional characters — perhaps because of the novel's lack of a hero.

This experiment provided students with a learning experience, not isolated information. It brought us face to face with Golding's notion of man's negativity, and somehow by facing that pessimism instead of just analyzing it, we all felt some paradoxical sense of hope, of optimism.

Strategies to Encourage Independent Reading

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Try these suggestions for motivating students and using independent individualized reading in the English classroom. They include two ways to use uninterrupted-silent-sustained-reading, an idea for a "Book-a-Day," a topical booklist, and parental involvement possibilities.

In order to guide our students' independent reading, we as teachers need first of all to know our students, their backgrounds, and their interests. Surveys at the beginning of the year can help, but students' writing, discussion, reactions to class-taught books and life events, and other hints through conversation are probably more accurate and more helpful. For example, Luan, a Vietnamese refugee, along with her siblings and her parents, has strong ties to a strife-torn country and has endured her own struggles there and here. She requested a book for extra-credit. I first gave her a book enjoyed by many about a freshman girl's first love. Though polite, Luan was not happy. I then remembered another book about a Russian girl's exile and privation. She was enchanted with this choice, read it eagerly, and shared it with her English teacher with more fluency than she had ever shown in previous discussions. Obviously, knowing one's students and being sensitive to their reactions is crucial in matching books and students.

Students in our reading center spend twenty-four minutes four/five times a week out of study hall time (for no credit). Most of the time is spent in individualized reading skill work (which may involve reading a novel). One class period each week is used for some silent, sustained reading — students *and* teacher. Though magazines are available, ***National Geographic, Time, Sports Illustrated, Ebony,*** and ***People,*** we have not allowed students to use those for silent reading because page-flipping and looking at pictures seem to be more time-consuming than reading.

For this period of reading, I ask for only fifteen minutes of actual reading time, developed into three five-minute timings. Sometimes even concentrating for that amount of time requires struggle, but most students can manage for five minutes. At the end of each timing, I ask students to note the number of pages they have read. I encourage them to read more pages each time, so that they have a goal. They come to realize that, if in the same

time period, they have read more pages, they have also read faster. If I want to check on their comprehension, I ask for an estimate from my students (as simple as rating their understanding "excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor") or for a few notes about the action in their reading.

For the first semester, I give students in each period several choices. *Everyone* then reads the same book (with the perennial minor exceptions). Mini-discussions are possible, especially as we begin the book. Students, of course, read at different rates. Those who finish can choose their books. Some check out the book in order to finish it. Others want similar titles, or books by the same author.

Positive results are evident. Students find that in only fifteen minutes a week they can finish an extra book in the semester. Competition raises its head, giving students incentive for reading and trying to read faster. Students do not feel overburdened, trying to read this book *and* the one assigned in their English class. Students can compare notes on what they do not understand, or they can exchange reactions. We (teacher and students) can also graph students' rates of reading, a possible motivator, for as many five-minute timings as it takes them to finish reading the book.

During the second semester I allow students to choose their own books for reading silently. The format for reading is the same. Some students read a book or more weekly from these choices because they read fifteen minutes in class Monday, take the book home, and finish it before the next in-class reading time. Others never read any book for more than fifteen minutes. Thus, though individual choice is given wide rein, and no person gets stuck with a book too hard, easy, or uninteresting for more than fifteen minutes, students may never "stick with" a book and ultimately enjoy it. Also, time to pick out the chosen book for the day's reading does cut into class time. Nevertheless, numerous titles get well-used. Perhaps some read more than they would ordinarily, as they can try a new book weekly.

Another idea I use is Dr. James Walker's "Book-a-Day." (Walker is now at Texas State University.) He literally cuts up a book. I use multiple copies when they are available or separate a book into chapters. Each student is handed or assigned one or two, if short, chapters and told to read and be ready to tell what he/she has read to the group. Once the whole book is given out, silent reading begins. Those who finish reading early may think (on paper, if desired) about their summaries of the chapters. Students listen carefully as summaries are given; those with earlier chapters listen to find out what happens to their characters and those with later chapters listen to determine how their infor-

mation fits in with the book. Within the reading center time limits, I have had to adapt to a "Book-in-Two-Three-Days." Nevertheless, students are impressed with *knowing* a book in a short time. Some will want to read it for themselves. Others will want books on similar topics or by the same authors.

Teacher-made booklists with annotations are available at this time. (Student input may be included on the lists as well.) For example, many students appear interested in "problem" novels about drug abuse, divorce, alcoholism, or suicide. Girls especially like the romance books, such as the Chrystal Falls, Sweet Valley High, or Windswept series. Having lists on such topics, of the books available in the classroom or library, gives the students more responsibility for their own choices and helps the teacher, particularly in areas where he/she may not be as knowledgeable. Also when time for individual teacher-student discussion is short, these topical lists can help fill the void.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, in our encouragement of student reading, we send parents letters at the end of each semester, telling them of their child's progress. We have also made up enclosures. At the end of the first semester, I include the words from a poster which speaks of family members sharing reading with each other. Also I give suggestions on how parents can help their teenagers with vocabulary, comprehension, sequence, and rate. These are helpful and fun to do. During the second semester, we include a xerox copy of a sheet from the National Association of Elementary School Principals on coping with the effects of television. Our students' parents are our best allies and role models in the teaching of reading and English. As Pat Koppman told luncheon guests at the Illinois Reading Council Conference in Peoria in February 1986, if parents teach their children the "3 R's," reading, respect, and responsibility, then we as teachers will find our job of teaching them our three — "reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic" — much easier!

Oral Reading: Magic and Motivation

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Once long ago and far away, three of us — a brother, a sister, and myself — sprawled on the linoleum floor in front of the radio, soaking up the enchanting strains of "Let's Pretend," our favorite

program. Without setting, other than the brown-cased Philco nestled among the books on the library table against the wall, we peered from behind half-opened doors at Jack and the Giant scuttling noisily down the beanstalk when he roared:

> Fee, fie, fo, fum,
> I smell the blood of an Englishman.

And when Ali Baba chanted "open Sesame," we were transported to that magnificent cave, gasping at vast hordes of diamonds and emeralds, rubies and gold. But hearing the vibrations of hoof-beats in the distance, we fled from the cave, muscles knotted with fear, clambering with Ali Baba up a nearby tree until the forty thieves passed from sight.

That was magic — on a Saturday morning.

By night we put on seven-leagued boots and ventured cautiously from warm beds, flying by propellered plane to an island conjured from dreams in the middle of the Atlantic. With Henry as pilot, Eleanor as "Jack," and me as "Mr. Oleander," we explored the gumdrop-treed island, drank our fill at the ever-bubbling lemonade fountains, and issued commands to our personal genies for our heart's desires. As often as not sleep overtook our storytelling before we could fly home again. But we awoke hours later in our own beds, still groggy with the night's memories.

That was magic — at nightfall.

And with the passing of "a thousand and one nights" and some odd days, the three of us grew older. We awoke one day in 1939 to discordant strains: News Flash: Germany has invaded Poland. Soon the world was at war. Frightened, we pulled down the shades, put out the electric lights, and practiced "blackouts." For five years the newer model Philco spewed out death and destruction abroad. At home we shared three meals a day from cracked china plates, we sewed broomstick skirts and plaid shirts on the treadle machine, and we read to each other ***Tish*** and ***Huckleberry Finn*** and ***Ivanhoe***. Without — uncertainty, within — security and warmth and love.

That was magic — for all time.

"For all time" translated into adulthood, to my family, eventually to my classroom. Could that heritage of listening to tales, creating adventures, and reading together conjure up a similar magic for my teaching career? Could I find that serendipitous peephole into other times and places for students often devoted to the here and now?

A few weeks ago, books in hand, my ninth graders and I roamed the dusty streets of Verona as velvet-clad nobles and sweating servants of the Montague and Capulet families. Without costumes

but with our identities pinned on (orange labels for the Montagues, yellow for the Capulets, brown for others), we swarmed into the brewing fight, with Tybalt "hissing our swords in scorn" until the arrival of Prince Escalus, mighty and dignified on his great steed (a tall four-legged stool). Such a walk-on play reading scene provokes a dramatic glimpse into the past, not too removed from present conflicts except for setting. A cleared end of a room and some chairs or stools help the words come alive for readers and audience.

To prepare students for reading with more focus and meaning, I often remind them that taking on a character role implies becoming John Proctor, Abigail, or Judge Hathorne. No longer are they Chad, Debbie, or Steve. Then before discussing character, the key element in synchronizing the make-believe and real worlds, pairs of students might reread typical dialogue between Proctor and the Judge to see how changes in emphasis and tone of voice can produce different shades of meaning. Added to this, theater games emphasizing similar vowel or consonant sounds and basic movement demonstrate dramatically the lyricism of the language. From such exercises students can get the notion of how lines sound when spoken and have some idea of the kinds of attitudes, gestures, and actions which are needed to accompany the dialogue.

Whether the script is ***Antigone, Twelve Angry Men,*** or a recent screen adaptation, play reading offers unlimited imaginative moments for group participation. Make these moments linger with conversation about feelings and issues, small group translations of an earlier prose into modern wording, or a Reader's Theatre script written and produced by students.

The storyteller in us begins long ago. Those were the uncomplicated days of childhood when we sat on the back steps, shivering in the shadows just before bedtime, telling ghost stories. The next day, back at school, the teacher became storyteller. From the second row, third seat back, I traveled the world on a magic carpet with Uncle Remus, Little Lord Fauntleroy, Tom Sawyer. Hiding aboard that pirate schooner, I watched burly mutineers plotting in the ship's hold. Even though invisible, I stepped aside when Long John Silver came on deck, parrot aperch his shoulder, fearsome with his eye patch, air of command, and agility despite his peg leg.

Excuse my imagination, but I can hear the storyteller's voice yet . . . See, over there. Santiago, it is, stooped, parch-skinned, in tattered shirt and khakis, struggling out of his fishing boat. He's bent over now, mooring his lines. The sagging shoulders and drawn face, fresh with the brine of tears and the sea, lift for an

instant, his eyes again measuring the great skeleton tied to his skiff. He turns toward home, feet shuffling, but with a slight upward thrust of his nose. . . .

Ride with me, if you will, on the wings of the wind. Gaze downward — a bit to the right. Isn't that General Zaroff, edging through the jungle growth, the baying of the hounds in the distance? He stops beneath a tree. Taking a black cigarette from his case, he studies the ground. His eyes travel inch by inch up the trunk. He smiles, blows a smoke ring, and walks carelessly away. Hot air rushes from Rainsford's lungs. Numbly he watches the retreating General. . . .

Clouds roll by. In the distant haze are other characters with tales to tell: Odysseus, Antigone, Gulliver, Sidney Carton, Sherlock Holmes, John Proctor, George and Lennie, Heathcliffe and Catherine, Hercule Poirot and Jane Marple, Shane, Scheherazade, the Ancient Mariner. And we hear dozens of storytellers: Chaucer, Dickens, Stevenson, Padriac Colum, Poe, Saki, O. Henry, E. B. White, Roald Dahl, Ambrose Bierce, Hemingway, Thurber. . . .

Now we drift gently back to the real world. The storyteller's voice, energetic with promise, fades. How to make the magic linger? Sharing narrative points out symbolic figures and events that help make sense of the world and our own experiences. So we talk, we write diaries and journals, monologues and playscripts, free verse — whatever fits the theme or mood of the tale, whatever strengthens our faith in words, our belief in books.

Where the storyteller ends, the poet begins. . . . Kubla Kahn's "Weave a circle round him thrice . . ." worked magic for me in days past. So did my father, a self-educated man who taught me to love poetry. He quoted lines to fit whatever the occasion demanded: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever . . ." or "My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky. . . ." "Let me live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man," his life's theme these eighty-four years, shaped his daily activities. He quoted from Wordsworth, Keats, Sidney Lanier, from the King James version of the Psalms and Proverbs. Without realizing it, he introduced us children to the rhythm and cadence of language. He pointed us to poetry for pleasure and practicality, as expression of thought and feeling for everyday living.

To transfer a similar magic to the classroom, I don't announce a poetry unit. We *do* poetry. Starting each session with the "Repeat after me" formula, we learn single, then paired lines, punctuated with pauses of varying lengths until the whole is quickly committed to memory. We engage in word play, assigning individual words or phrases to each of half a dozen students. The

teacher-conductor then plays the "scale," creating an oral poem much like directing a handbell choir. On occasion students shape a single-sentence metaphor such as "I am a gray pebble on a lonely beach." Again with the teacher directing twenty-five verbal metaphors as a verse choir, the antiphonal and dissonant responses fashion a larger than life poem.

Alternating with memory work and games, we read sensory-filled prose paragraphs, underline striking phrases, and jot these down on paper. We play with line lengths and read aloud until the "right" rhythm emerges and the continuity of events is unified. Often we share selections from Frost, Masters, Hughes, and other poets. At times we act out the rhythms of Mason Williams or do choral readings of Sandburg's "Jazz Fantasia," Benét's "The Skater of Ghost Lake," or whatever story poems and ballads catch our fancy as we "seize the moment." Sometimes we illustrate or make collections of our favorites from both published and classroom authors. But we always read, listen, and "publish" by duplicator selected "works," two lines or twenty, from class poets. To experience poetry orally is to invite appreciation as we see, feel, and grow together.

If there is something we can learn from the ancient power of the poets and storytellers, it is this — the use of the oral approach for pleasure, for satisfying that instinctive craving for a good story, for fine-tuning the ear to diction, cadence, and rhythm. Reading aloud improves the skills of listening, comprehending, thinking. Reading aloud introduces students to significant ideas, events, and emotions common to human experience, meaningful to daily living. Reading aloud enhances vocabularly, making connections between the printed page and the spoken word. Most importantly, reading aloud binds together teacher and learner, adults and students in the secret knowledge of sharing.

What and how to read aloud? The craft, at once simple and exacting, follows a few modest rules: choose wisely, plan ahead, focus correctly, end spontaneously. Here are some basic considerations.

What selections? Choose only the best literature, particularly what excites you, the teacher, and what interests students at their level of maturity and sophistication. Delve into a variety of genres — fiction, nonfiction, poetry, plays. Try a variety of styles — informational, humorous, serious, poignant. Select materials that are timeless and universal in appeal.

What preparation? Practice beforehand, paying careful attention to word groups, pitch, rate, emphasis, pronunciation of un-

familiar words. When prepared thoughtfully, the emotional quality of the selection will shine through. Remember that a sensitive reading is more desirable than a great performance.

What presentation? During the reading make the words the focus of attention. Eliminate unnecessary distractions as pacing or gesturing. At times end the reading on the threshold of the rising action. At other times read to a conclusion. Make the experience both a reading lesson and an aesthetic event.

What follow-up? Let the reading motivate discussion (student-initiated is often the best), writing activities (reactions, diaries, journals, essays, poems), or other creative activities (reader's theatre, chamber theatre, acting out, illustrating). Guard against activities that degenerate into mere busy work. Whatever the format, reinforce and clarify the connections between literature and life.

The best literature, prepared and presented well, leaving something to do or think about, has always conjured up its own excitement. The spell is timeless, raising those moments of laughter and tears shared with people we care about in a warm context, whether home or classroom.

Recently at a family gathering we pulled the dusty copy of Mary Roberts Rinehart's ***Tish*** from the shelf, wondering if the old magic was still there. Mother read aloud. Minutes later the same delighted laughter we had known so long ago rippled through the room.

This is magic — for all time.

Reading Across the Curriculum: A Holistic Approach

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JOHN A. LOGAN COLLEGE
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In 1983 the Illinois Community College Board mandated that all community colleges identify and place all students who were lacking in basic reading, writing, and math skills. This mandate was to revolutionize our reading program.

In the past, our college had recommended developmental reading to students who were low in reading ability. We usually had three

or four sections of fifteen students. We taught an individualized, isolated skills approach with primarily motivational grading. We felt that the program was sound, but we were never sure if the students were able to transfer skills from our class to content courses (courses which require substantial reading). For example, could the student who learned a hundred vocabulary words use these words in other courses? Could the student who learned note-taking skills from our mini-lectures take good notes in a history course? We did not know. But, suddenly, we knew our course had to be very accountable. In response to the ICCB mandate, our administration and faculty decided that students in developmental courses had to earn an A, B, or C before they could enroll in most regular transfer courses. This decision meant that a grade of C in our reading course should indicate a potential C in a content course such as Political Science 132.

Accordingly, we needed to be sure that our students could succeed in college courses. We needed to have a meaningful, credible, positive, applicable course in reading. The administration supported us by giving us release time and providing additional funds, which were primarily used for hiring a reading consultant. We were fortunate to secure the services of Dr. Pat Rigg, a consultant in language and literacy now at the University of Arizona. She guided us for four months as we read extensively in professional journals and texts, brainstormed endlessly, and traveled to observe other programs.

The results were that over the summer of 1984, we developed a new course, Process Reading 053, and designed the materials to be used with it — all based on the philosophy that reading is a total process. The transfer of reading strategies to other courses was of paramount importance.

To accomplish this task, we asked ourselves several questions:

- What is reading?
- How can we help students understand what they do when they read?
- How can we know if these students transfer their understanding of the reading process to content courses?
- How can we know how successful the transfer is?

As we struggled to answer these questions, the course gradually began to take shape. We realized that we needed the help of instructors in actual content courses to ensure the transfer; we wanted to provide an actual "slice of college life." We contacted friends who were teaching content courses, people we knew would be interested and willing to work with us. Together, we set the course up in three segments:

— Section I: Reading as a Process
— Section II: Practicum with Instructor of Required Course
— Section III: Practicum with Instructor of Elective Course

For the past two years, the course has been structured this way, and it has worked well. At the beginning of each semester, we try to establish what the reading process is all about. Rather than employ a negative approach that focuses on why students are poor readers, we focus on what successful readers do.[1] We spend time discussing many strategies which successful readers use, and then work through several activities with students which demonstrate these strategies.

For example, we stress that successful readers participate; they don't spectate. They actively integrate their own background of knowledge with the printed page. They also question, predict, and confirm. Students usually respond enthusiastically to activities that engage them in active participation as they begin to view reading as a process rather than a product.

The remaining time in the first third of the course is spent covering the pragmatic core of the course — the Three Stage Reading Process, a technique we adapted from Indiana University's Summer Bridge Program.[2] Stage I involves several strategies to apply before intensive reading, such as previewing, surveying, visualizing or pre-mapping, pre-summarizing, and setting purposes. Stage II involves underlining main ideas, writing marginal notes, and identifying key concepts. Stage III includes strategies to be used after reading, such as constructing key concept cards, post-mapping, and post-summarizing.

In the second section of the course, we work with an instructor who teaches a required course in the baccalaureate curriculum. For example, we have worked with the Health 101 instructor studying a unit on alcoholism. First, students applied the Three Stage Reading Process to the assigned chapter on alcoholism. Next, students prepared for two lectures from the content area instructor by discussing and formulating note-taking strategies. All reading sections then convened for the first large group lecture, where they could implement their strategies. Back in the reading classroom, students identified any problem encountered, shared successes, and planned any adjusted strategies for the second lecture. Finally, students began to prepare for an objective exam over the unit, synthesizing their textbook and classroom materials, and formulating test-taking strategies. They took the same test the Health 101 instructor uses in his course for that unit, and he graded the test according to his standards. This grade was a

major one in the reading course. At this point each semester, instructors and students meet on an individual basis for conferences to share progress evaluations.

In the final third of the course, we offer a second practicum, but with calculated changes. First, we select an instructor who teaches an elective course which could be a part of the students' baccalaureate curriculum. Most recently, for example, we worked with the art instructor on an architecture unit. In this second practicum, we look for less traditional methods of classroom presentation and more subjective evaluation methods. This time around, we encourage students to become more independent learners by suggesting that they choose and implement the strategies which work best for them in the reading process. Again, students earn realistic grades from the content area instructor. Students' comments make it clear that these grades validate the course. When we return tests, students frequently ask if the other instructor graded it, and if the grade is really what they would have earned in that other course.

Follow-up

In the spring of 1985, we conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of the new developmental reading course. We compared the performance of those students in the reading course who successfully completed the course (earned a C or higher) in the 1984 Fall Semester with their performance in content courses in the 1985 Spring Semester.[3] In addition students completed a questionnaire designed to determine their perception of the reading course as preparation for content courses. This questionnaire was distributed near the end of the 1985 Spring Semester. Both quantitative and qualitative results were gratifying. Statistically there was a positive correlation between reading course performance and content course performance. In fact, 74% of those who earned a grade of A, B, or C in the reading course went on to earn grades of C or better in content courses. Qualitative results were also encouraging. A strong 92% of respondents reported they would recommend the reading course to other students. The 8% objecting thought the techniques should be taught before college. Student responses to the questionnaire apparently confirmed the statistical results of the study.

It is exciting to teach our reading course these days because we feel confident that it does prepare students to succeed in content courses. Also, there are other benefits to the program. Not only do the students become better learners, but the instructors become better teachers. Since we read the materials, attend the lectures,

do the projects and take the tests with our students, we are fellow learners and can better understand students' needs. For example, experiencing test anxiety ourselves enables us to help our students more effectively in this area. Overall, our students respond positively to our role modeling. Other instructors also benefit. When we conferred with Indiana University faculty members in 1984, they predicted this slice of college life approach would impact on the teaching of content area instructors. We have seen this happen. Our participation in the learning puts us in a unique position to offer content area instructors special insights. They actually anticipate this feedback and, in turn, provide us with suggestions and encouragement. This professional interaction is very stimulating and does much to establish the credibility of the developmental program on our campus. Best of all, we share the feeling that we are no longer teaching *about* reading, but that we are teaching reading, the actual process.

Notes

[1] We learned this approach from Lee Vogel Kolzow and Jane Lehmann in ***College Reading Strategies for Success*** (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982).

[2]We gratefully acknowledge our debt to Drs. Carolyn Burke, Sharon Smith, and Janet Jackson for their generous and inspiring consultation during our visit to Indiana University in the spring of 1984.

[3] We thank Dr. Ron Browning, health and math instructor at John A. Logan College, for his statistical analysis of our evaluative data and his cordial assistance in interpreting that data.

No Man Is an Island: A Book Discussion Seminar for the Gifted

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NAPERVILLE NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Research Corridor, Silicon Valley-Illinois, High Tech Suburb: Naperville, where our brightest students are apt to be more conversant with computers than with literature, more respectful of hard facts than of protean ideas. Of course, we English teachers are convinced that none of our students can fulfill their human potential unless they develop as independent readers. Our challenge is to motivate them all to read widely and thoughtfully. In a book

discussion seminar offered this past summer to fifteen high school students identified by the district as "gifted" and thus eligible for a state-funded enrichment program, I found an approach that seemed to stimulate, expand, and challenge these talented young people as independent readers. In the process, my belief was confirmed that we can encourage our students to become lifetime readers when we set up nurturing environments based on adult guidance, open-ended discussion, opportunities for creative expression, and, above all, emphasis on the student at the center of his/her own education.

I designed the course to include a number of classics, weaving the readings around a pre-announced theme: no man is an island. The books to be studied were posted in advance: ***The Good Earth*** (Pearl Buck), ***Billy Budd*** (Herman Mellville), ***Black Boy*** (Richard Wright), ***Julius Ceasar*** (William Shakespeare), ***A Tale of Two Cities*** (Charles Dickens), and ***The Lives of a Cell*** (Lewis Thomas). I avoided duplicating selections from the regular curriculum. In addition, I consciously sought variety in genre, gender, time period, and level of difficulty. The five-week course was arranged to move fluidly from a focus on the individual in the family, to the individual in society, to the individual in political systems, and finally to the individual in his/her ecological context. I found the students to be ravenous for reading material, so I provided a great deal more content than I had planned. I supplemented before, during, and after every major work with poetry, short stories, essays, articles from the newspaper, films — whatever seemed to clarify or expand the topics under discussion. I kept a mental file on each student, noting particular interests. Whenever the occasion arose, I gave the student a supplemental reading (the real thing in preference to an author's name or title). Not only did my students read these extras, they shared them among themselves. Thus, the six core books mushroomed into an extensive list. Most read more than was "required," following their own interests and abilities. They read other works by the authors being studied in class; they explored works from the same time periods; they read works with similar or contrasting themes. They studied everything from existentialism to oriental mysticism. They dipped into the works of Jane Austen, Albert Camus, Joseph Conrad, Fydor Dostoyevsky, Franz Kafka, Carl Sagan, Kurt Vonnegut, Alice Walker, and others. Asked how their independent reading would have developed this summer without the course, the participants agreed that the structure of the class was beneficial. One boy said he would have re-read Tolkien's ***Lord of the Rings*** for the fifth time. A few confessed

they probably would have read nothing at all. Some book lovers used the seminar to supplement their independent reading, which proceeded unabated throughout the session. All felt the class offered a kind of stimulation unavailable to them otherwise.

Deciding that students like these probably have access to popular fiction, I chose to assign classics. I must admit I suffered a few uneasy moments prior to registration — what if our sophisticated teenagers of 1986 deemed such works obsolete, irrelevant, unworthy of their precious time? Their response to the material turned out to be unanimously positive: "I was introduced to new lifestyles and values — I've become a more rounded person"; "The books challenged me"; "I felt no sense of being limited, but rather a freedom of thought and feeling inspired by great literature." In the regular curriculum, the needs of our best readers are too often compromised to accommodate the levels of their less able classmates. In this situation, my students could test their limits of comprehension and interpretation.

They appreciated the community that arose from cooperative discussion. Some said they had taken the course because they were tired of being the only interested students carrying on discussions with the teacher while their peers nodded off or polished their fingernails in the back of the room. Whether or not their perceptions of a typical English class are accurate, our most highly motivated students, the ones who bring joy to our teaching, sometimes are depressed in school because they feel isolated. They became for this brief time a family of learners where give and take was the rule. One student expressed it well when she said: "My reading has always taken place in a secluded atmosphere; it was a solitary exploration. But in this class I've regained something important that is lost by reading in private: group discovery." Janet, a high-achieving senior, revealed that she had recently engaged in her first "meaningful conversations about books" outside a classroom: "This course has taught me how to express myself about what is very important to me." In order to create the positive atmosphere conducive to mutual sharing, I built the class around certain principles announced on the first day: no study questions, no quizzes or objective tests, no essays or term papers, no discussion points. What I did require was: reading on schedule; active participation in discussion; regular journal writing in response to the subject matter; creative writing assignments; dramatics, panel discussions, group projects and other nontraditional activities; as well as formal vocabulary study of words derived from the literature. My students were enthusiastic and productive. They arrived early to class, talked through break time,

and often refused to leave for the day until they had exhausted the issue at hand. Indeed, I was awed by their commitment. To my question about cooperative versus competitive approaches to education, the ten-year-old high school junior replied, "In this class we all helped each other get to the bottom of the books." Mike remarked, "Here I could learn instead of concentrating on hoarding points." About the interpretive process, Brian observed, "It's a chain reaction — we play off one another's ideas and build to an understanding. This way we get a multi-faceted view. Without it, I would get only one impression of the book: mine. This kind of discussion would be impossible in a competitive environment."

As a means of bringing continuity to the course, I organized the curriculum around a theme: John Donne's dictum, no man is an island. I conscientiously tried not to impose an artificial overlay on the material and trusted the literature itself to generate questions, connections, and insight. Nevertheless, the theme threaded its way through the fabric of the literature and guided my lesson plans. I was delighted by the discoveries that arose from the juxtaposition of works and ideas. To Julius Caesar's speech, "Let me have men about me that are fat,/Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights./Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;/He thinks too much: such men are dangerous," someone responded, "He wants men like Kayerts and Carlier (from Joseph Conrad's "Outpost of Progress") — they're useless, lazy and ignorant, not a threat like Cassius." We laughed often in this class, as groups of people do when they see their world in a new way. Also, we affirmed the relevance of such topics as the behavior of individuals in groups, the cycles of life, spiritual versus material values, good and evil, man's inhumanity to man, sacrifice and redemption, responsibility to self versus responsibility to others and to posterity: rich, compelling, and humanizing subjects. Kendra, a tenth grader, was troubled by Richard Wright's isolation: "In one sense he was an island, apart from humanity in the South. His dreams and ideals 'islandated' him from his race and family. I don't know the answer yet, but I do think this theme is a great one to grapple with." Amy concluded: "The themes of the books intertwined, merged and spun off each other — adding a new dimension to the course." What disconcerted me, then amused me, were the more common reactions: "To tell the truth, I forgot the theme." "I read for pleasure, not for hidden themes." "What theme?"

On the last day, everyone presented a creative interpretation in response to the course. Through their self-expressions, I evaluated

to what extent my students had synthesized the central ideas of the literature. One by one, they offered their gifts: a satiric short story about the pressures of nonconformity, a futuristic portrait of a seeker who discovers more truth than he can bear, a terrifying science fiction account of the aftermath of nuclear war, parodies of ***Julius Caesar*** and ***A Tale of Two Cities***, a song, poems. Appropriately, the last presentation, a poem called "Humanity," used the metaphor of islands and a continent to envision the interdependency of human beings: "Islands, fragrant and green/Moored together/Connected to the mainland."

No student is an island: inveterate readers should not have to be furtive readers — locked behind closed doors. The minds of our mathematics and science prodigies need to be challenged by irreducible ideas. All our young readers need the fellowship of others for the purpose of discussing literature and life. My summer students have been bored with what they deem "fun and games" enrichment activities. Contrasting this content-centered course with previous skill-centered "gifted" classes, Nora observed, "Here there was something real to talk about." Alkes recognized the value of both approaches, but expressed the limitations of a skill-dominated curriculum this way: "After all, a robot can be thought of as highly skilled." We have an obligation, then, not only to teach our students how to do, but also to teach them how to know.

Might the lessons shared in my classroom this summer have application beyond the particular moment and set of circumstances? Could we be better serving our talented students during the official school year? These superior readers and thinkers thrive on like-minded company — an effort should be made to put them together on a regular basis. Age difference seems to matter less to them than does the type of learners with whom they are placed. In my class, the ages ranged from ten to eighteen; the grade levels spanned nine to twelve. Because they are capable of an unusual degree of independence, these students should be given much more freedom. Less competition, more nontraditional assignments, more group responsibility: these recommendations reverberated through their final evaluations. In addition, they pleaded for more discussion and much more literature at a higher reading level. They spoke with gratitude of teachers who have guided them to books, stayed after class to talk with them, and allowed them to express themselves in nonformulaic ways.

And what about the majority of students who are not especially talented — how might they benefit? In our legitimate struggle to teach the basic skills of literary analysis and coherent written ex-

pression, have we neglected to teach reading for its own sake? Have we replaced open-ended group discussion with lonely seat work? Are we suspicious of creative responses to literature because they seem too frivolous? Has the fun gone out of our classrooms? Our students will not choose reading over their televisions, stereos, sports, or jobs unless they believe that doing it is worthwhile. They will continue to read ***Cliff's Notes*** instead of ***The Scarlet Letter*** and to read not at all outside school unless we learn how to draw them into the magic of books.

In our technological society, increasingly we are turning to our scientific community for answers to human problems. When we teach these future leaders, we must provide them with something more than skills — with a lifetime habit of reading, thinking, and caring about ideas. The future depends on the broadness of their vision. Like many in my book discussion seminar, Faisel plans to pursue a career in science. I was privileged to have watched him grow as a human being this summer. If only his reaction to great literature could be shared by all our students everywhere: "My eyes have been opened."

Garden Hills Turnaround in Reading

PHYLLIS WILKEN
GARDEN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CHAMPAIGN

In 1980, the Garden Hills Elementary School principal, staff, students, and parents became involved in a major effort to turn the negative aspects in their school into positive ones. They were faced with the need to raise reading and math scores and eliminate behavior problems. They decided that the need to improve reading was of the highest priority.

The Garden Hills students come from diverse racial groups, environment, and locations in and around Champaign. The school community includes the integrated urban neighborhoods surrounding the school, one of which includes subsidized housing. Approximately one half of the students are bused from a 50-square-mile area. This area includes families from farms, minifarms, four trailer parks, a campground, and a small village. There is approximately an equal number of low socio-economic status minority and nonminority students. The student body comprises 35-40% black minority plus 2-3% other minorities. The population

is also transient. Approximately 25% of the students enrolled in the spring do not return in the fall. The turnover during the school year has ranged from 32-40% for the last five years.

Garden Hills serves a K-5 student population. There are three special education self-contained programs: (1) Early Childhood-Developmentally Delayed (for 3 and 4 year olds), (2) Intermediate Multiple Impaired, and (3) Educable Mentally Handicapped. There is a Chapter I resource reading program, Preparatory program for first grade students, and a get-ready program for 3 and 4 year olds. There is a resource learning disabilities and speech and language program. Champaign Community Unit 4 District offers a program for the gifted. Six students are bussed to another school for that program.

In September, 1980, the principal developed a five-year plan for the improvement of the school, based on recommendations made by the IN-Purdue University Multicultural Center. The report stated that if improvements were not made, "confusion and chaos" could result. Five years later, a follow-up study stated that Garden Hills "is now an exemplary school" in which students and staff are given responsibility and are encouraged to "think." The school climate is "clearly positive." In 1986, the school was one of twelve public schools in Illinois and one of 212 in the nation to be recognized for "Excellence in Education" by the United States Department of Education.

Improvement in reading was the first task to be undertaken. In June of 1980 the K-3 staff met to discuss the teaching of reading. They discussed various instructional strategies, techniques, and materials.

Teachers were given an opportunity to think about the discussion and were asked to call the principal within two days. The nine teachers responded the next day. It was the unanimous decision of the group to adopt a teaching method called direct instruction. Materials and resources were selected that were developed in accordance with the direct-instruction strategies. Permission was granted by the district's superintendent of instruction to use the materials and resources for the students who were performing at the lowest level in Grades 1-3. The Chapter I reading teacher and the dual kindergarten teacher had used these programs in previous years at Garden Hills. Since the teachers were familiar with the program, this made the decision easier since teachers had noted that even the nonreaders in the classroom did learn to read with Chapter I services. Teachers in Grades 4 and 5 adopted the direct-instruction program within two years of 1980.

The decision was made at this time to teach reading formally to kindergarteners who were ready to read. The remaining students were placed in a language development program. There are many students who complete the primer reading program, while other students remain in the language program all year.

Consultants were secured for inservicing the teachers. Funds for the inservices were generated from proposal writing, joining a national dissemination project, the publisher of the materials, the building budget, and the PTA. Inservice was maintained over a two-year period.

By January of 1981, the teachers were requesting that additional students be placed in the reading program. This necessitated the review of the program by the district's K-12 reading committee. Permission was granted by this group to allow Garden Hills to use a reading program which was based on the needs of the students in our school. This program was different from the district-prescribed program. At this time also, the program was extended to include grades 4 and 5 students.

Since this teaching strategy was instrumental in increasing students' reading achievement, it was adopted for math in 1981 and spelling in 1983. The direct-instruction teaching strategy has now been extended to include all subjects (even music and PE). Teachers are enthusiastic and supportive. The advantages of using this methodology is evident when I visit and observe in the classrooms. The extension of direct instruction was by design. The goal was to minimize the students' adjustments and to maximize learning. It is our belief that students have to learn how the teacher is teaching and then learn the content of what is being taught. There are fewer adjustments to be made in learning the teaching strategy at Garden Hills. As the students progress through the different grades and go to the resource teachers, they know that the pattern for teaching will always be the same. We believe this consistency and standardization of teaching strategies is one of the contributing factors to the gains in achievement scores in reading and other subjects.

The direct-instruction strategy has a plan for instruction which includes a sequence demonstration, guided practice, and independent practice. Much of the instruction is conducted in small groups at the primary level and in larger groups at the intermediate level. It provides specific, immediate verbal interaction and feedback as to the accuracy of the students' work and responses. It systematically breaks a large task into small steps. Mastery of skills is the goal for each student. Skills are repeated until they are learned.

Rate and accuracy checks for oral reading are made at specified intervals. The students welcome the opportunity to demonstrate their progress. Many teachers have individual charts for students with the scores recorded so they can monitor their performance. This procedure increases the rate of reading, which provides for an "automaticity of reading." The report, ***Nation of Readers,*** stated that when reading becomes an automatic operation, comprehension can improve. The goal for Garden Hills School this year is for students to become automatic readers. Progress will be determined by the recorded rate and by accuracy checks.

Results of this approach to the study of reading is reported in the tables below. In 1980, the teachers chose the goal of improving each grade level's average reading score by two months on a standardized test at the end of a two-year period. The two-month gain was to be compared by averaging the total reading scores from 1975-79.

Champaign Unit 4 tested second through fifth grades in the fall of 1980-83 in reading at the elementary level using the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT).

Reading

	1980	1981	1982	1983	Gain
Grade 2	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.5	.5
Grade 3	2.7	2.8	3.2	3.2	.5
Grade 4	3.5	3.8	3.9	3.9	.4
Grade 5	4.8	4.9	4.9	5.4	.6

In 1984-85, the SRA standardized achievement and educational ability tests were administered in the spring for reading, math, and language. They were given to grades 1-5. Please note that the students performed or achieved at a higher percentile than their Educational Ability Score indicated they might. Results in percentiles were:

Grade	EAS	Reading Achievement	Dist. Ave. Achievement	Language Achievement	Dist. Ave. Achievement
1	39	60	55	52	51
2	34	44	56	36	52
3	40	61	66	59	67
4	37	52	63	45	57
5	45	48	58	45	55

Grouping of students occurs within each grade level. Students are exchanged so that they can be placed at their performance level. This organization can provide various levels of reading at

each grade level. A below-average, average, and above-average group is always provided. The numbers of reading groups depend on the needs of the students. However, each teacher usually teaches at least two groups per day at the primary level. Intermediate teachers teach one group that is larger in size. At grades 4 and 5, reading is offered from third to sixth grade level. A few students are grouped across grade levels. For example, a third grader may be placed in a fifth grade reading group with fourth graders or he/she may be placed in a first grade level with second graders. Students are placed in the reading program by placement test, teacher recommendation, performance level, and standardized test scores.

In the spring of 1983, the publisher of the materials we were using requested that a videotape be made of students and teachers during direct-instruction reading classes. This request was honored. Three videotapes were made and have been widely distributed in the United States and other countries. These are being used for training and information purposes. They provide an overview of direct instruction, presentation of a lesson, and a guide for making corrections.

There are many activities which support the reading program. Support for and motivation for reading have taken many forms. The parents are always involved. In 1979-80, PTA gave a paperback book for every four books read by primary students and one for every eight books read by intermediate students. In 1981, the PTA had a "reading train" built. It was placed in the library with tickets issued to students by the classroom teacher for a specified arrival and departure time. A record was made when the student's work was completed, when an individual did good work, and when school work improved. This enabled all the students to use the "reading train."

The PTA sponsored book fairs in both fall and spring. These events were held when special evening meetings occurred so that parents could help their children in the selecting of books. This was a service to parents, for they could buy suitable reading material at the right level for their children.

Garden Hills cooperates with community agencies that value reading. Awards are given for summer reading by the public library. The library and the school arrange a time to present the awards. A representative from the library returns to a school assembly in the spring to explain the library's summer program. The Junior Women's Club comes to the school twice a year to present books to second grade students. They cooperate with RIF (*R*eading *I*s *F*undamental), a national program.

A program, Reading Partners, began in 1982. Senior citizens and retired teachers listen to students read orally one to two hours one day per week in April and October. The procedure is informal. A volunteer and a student sit outside the classroom door in the hall while the student reads for five to eight minutes. Volunteers may discuss the material read. However, the only requirement is to listen and tell the student that they enjoy reading with them.

The objectives of the program are:

1. Motivate students to read.
2. Help students with their reading by reading aloud.
3. Help students discover the world through reading.
4. Demonstrate to students that volunteers believe reading is important.
5. Help student to relate to adults outside the home.

Volunteers leave the school with a sense of being needed and appreciated. The students are always anxious to read to the partners. It is difficult to assess which group gains the most rewards for this activity.

The Garden Hills Family Reading Club was initiated in September, 1984, at the open house for parents. The Garden Hills advisory committee developed the program. The club was founded because the staff wanted to promote reading at home. The belief was that any further gains in reading achievement would be made by additional practice outside school hours. The objectives of the club are:

1. Provide practice for reading.
2. Motivate students to become enthusiastic readers outside of school.
3. Help students appreciate and enjoy reading.
4. Show that parents believe reading is important.

The procedures for the operation of the club are given to the parents. They are provided with a form for recording the minutes read. The students read 3,300 hours in 1984-85 and 6,200 hours in 1985-86. The procedures for operation of the club are given to parents:

1. Each day we ask that parents and your child sit down and read *orally* together for 10 minutes. These minutes will count toward your child's being awarded a Family Reading Certificate.
2. Children in grades 3, 4, and 5 should read orally to you. Children in grades K, 1 and 2 may be read to. We encourage you to have the children read to you as soon as they are able.
3. Each day that you read together for 10 minutes, sign the tracking form.

4. When you have read orally with your child for a total of 250 minutes, return the tracking form to the teacher. A Garden Hills Family Reading Club Certificate will be placed on the bulletin board in your child's classroom.
5. For each additional 250 minutes of oral reading, a gold sticker will be placed on your Family Reading Club Certificate.
6. For each 250 minutes of family reading, students will receive a color-coded leaf with their name, minutes read, and the teacher's name.
7. Leaves are given to the principal at lunch time. Students are recognized and interviewed by the principal. Leaves are placed on the Garden Hills trees daily in the community room by the custodian.
8. Enjoy your family reading! It should be a pleasant, enjoyable time together! It will help your child be a better reader!

In 1986 the Family Reading Club was featured in a nationally televised one-hour documentary entitled "*D*rop *E*verything *A*nd *R*ead" (DEAR). It was one of three public schools featured. The program was shown in major cities on ABC, CBS, NBC, and cable networks. Two families were videotaped in their homes in family reading sessions. It was an honor for students, staff, and parents to be a part of a large cast from various walks of life that nationally proclaims reading is an important lifelong skill.

This school year (1986-87) we have 100% classroom participation in the Pizza Hut's national program, "Book-It." This program has enlisted families that we did not reach through the Family Reading Club.

In addition to the school's reading activities, there are projects in the classrooms. We provide unusual places to read, such as a bathtub, reading corners with soft cushions, and tables with books on a variety of subjects. Teachers construct attractive bulletin boards in the halls and classrooms that focus on reading.

Efforts are made at Garden Hills to make reading important. From the instruction in the classroom to the reading in the home, the efforts are comprehensive and determined. The results are gratifying and rewarding to students, staff and parents. The students at Garden Hills do learn to read and enjoy it!

Call for Manuscripts

English Teaching in Small Schools **Deadline: June 30, 1987**

Teachers who have taught in both large and small schools point out the great contrast in working conditions. What "plays in Peoria" may not necessarily go in downstate Illinois. Undoubtedly the size and location of a school's community can affect attitudes, methods, and even subject matter. Since small schools receive comparatively little attention in professional books and journals, this issue will address their special problems and unique opportunities.

Teaching the Gifted **Deadline: September 30, 1987**

Increasingly attention is being paid to the needs of exceptionally bright students. Are you doing anything at your school to help such young people realize their potential? The *IEB* is interested in receiving manuscripts describing special programs, innovative practices, or simply ways of reaching the gifted within an ordinary class. Also useful would be bibliographies of current literature on the subject, statements of philosophy, or a simple sharing of rewarding experiences.

Illinois Students Write:
Their Favorite Teachers and Books **Deadline: November 30, 1987**

Ask your students to write something creative on this subject — a story, poem, or dramatic dialogue — or use the following assignments in your classes:

Write a short essay about a favorite teacher you have had. In your essay do these things: Explain when and where you had this teacher; help your reader to see your teacher in action in the classroom, to know what your teacher was like as a person, and to understand, specifically, what the teacher did and said to become a favorite of yours. Refer to specific assignments, expectations, or character traits, and make your essay organized, thoughtful, personal, and original. Include the teacher's name and school in your essay, plus the grade in which you had the teacher.

Write a short essay about a favorite book you have read in or out of school. Explain the reasons you read the book, the main parts about it that you particularly liked, and the specific reasons you think it is a good book or important book for people to read. Feel free to select either a book you read in the past or one you have read recently. Quote from the book if that will help communicate your thoughts about it. Make your essay organized, thoughtful, personal, and original. And, obviously, be sure to include the full title of the book plus the author's name.

Save the best work you receive this semester so that you can have your students' writing considered for publication in the *IEB*. Submission details will be printed in the next issue.

Manuscript Guidelines

Manuscripts should be from five to ten pages in length, typed double spaced, and submitted in duplicate. Please follow the new MLA style, including documentation within the text rather than through footnotes. Provide full identification of school affiliation and note if manuscript has been submitted elsewhere. For full consideration, manuscripts should meet the issue deadline and be on-topic.

Since each issue of the *Bulletin* focuses on a specific subject, writers are asked to consult the Call for Manuscripts included in each issue. Submissions should explore some aspect of the featured topic and should be written with an audience of English teachers (elementary through college level) in mind. Articles that provide practical information, pedagogical application of theory, or solutions to problems faced by English teachers are the most welcome.

The editor will acknowledge the receipt of all manuscripts and will notify the contributor of its acceptance or rejection. Please include with the manuscript a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The editor reserves the right to make minor revisions in the manuscript without consulting the writer and may return a submission with requests for more extensive revision before acceptance for publication.

Send manuscripts to Dorothy Matthews, Department of English 608 South Wright Street, Urbana, IL 61801.

More specific guidelines for prospective contributors will be sent upon request.